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Microcosm ...

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Each year the Division of Humanities of Copiah-Lincoln Community College holds a literary competition for college students and for high school students in Copiah, Lincoln, Lawrence, and Simpson Counties. Selected college entries compete in the Mississippi Community College Creative Writing Association competition and in the Southern Literary Festival competition.

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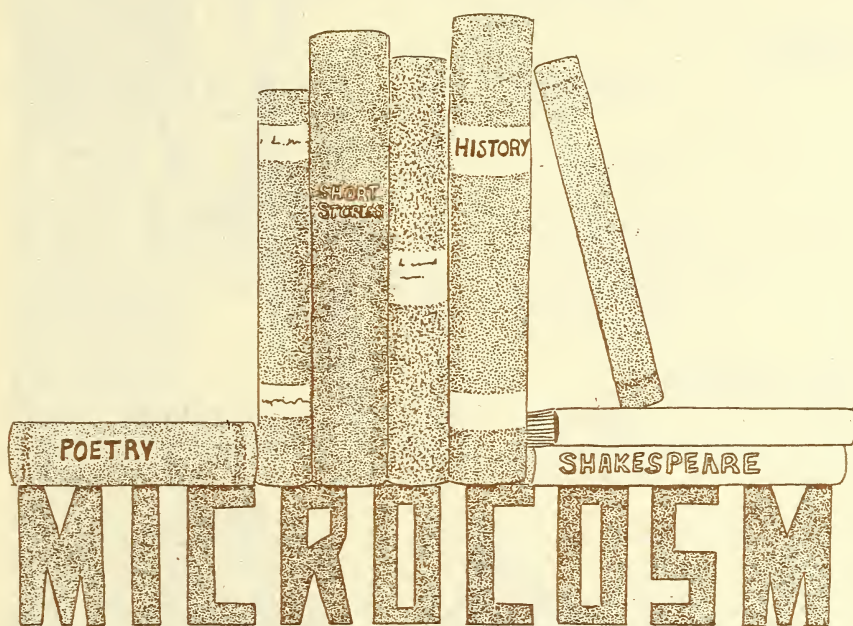
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VOLUME XVI

Copiah-Lincoln Community College
Wesson, Mississippi

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**First Place, Mississippi Community College Creative Writing Association Award.

*Mississippi Community College Creative Writing Association Award.



PATRICIA KILLINGSWORTH

Copiah-Lincoln Literary Hall of Fame

Ray Hammons, a Wesson native and a 1941 honor graduate of Copiah-Lincoln Junior College, is a world authority on the peanut and its genetics.

After serving in World War II, Hammons obtained the bachelor and master of science degrees from Mississippi State College. In 1953, he earned the doctor of philosophy degree from North Carolina State University while also serving as a crop science research instructor.



Serving as an assistant agronomy professor from 1953 through 1955 at Purdue University, Hammons then worked as an Agricultural Research Service geneticist. He also worked with the U. S. Department of Agriculture in cooperative investigations with the University of Georgia's Coastal Plain Experiment Station in Tifton, Georgia. In this position, he had concurrent leadership responsibility for federal, regional and state projects on the genetic enhancement of the peanut. In addition, from 1973 through 1984, Hammons was research leader for the ARS's Crops Research Unit.

Dr. Hammons has served on the editorial boards of *Agronomy Journal*, *Crop Science* and *Peanut Science*, and for eleven years he has compiled and edited the *Peanut Research* newsletter for the American Peanut Research and Education Society.

He also has collaborated with 109 colleagues from six continents as co-authors in scientific investigations with the research results being published in 291 technical papers or popular articles. Hammons, a resident of Tifton, Georgia, has contributed chapters in various books and has written articles for three encyclopedias, including the popular World Book.

A lecturer at numerous seminars, symposia and scientific meetings, he has served as a consultant to the International Peanut Program, the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and several other national and international organizations.

Dr. Hammons received the 1975 Golden Peanut Research Award, the 1980 Distinguished Senior Faculty Award from the Georgia Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta, and the 1981 Distinguished Service Award from the Georgia Peanut Commission.

Selected as Co-Lin Alumnus of the Year in 1982, Dr. Hammons is retired and travels extensively with his wife, Annie Ray Howell Hammons. They have three daughters, Mrs. F. E. Harmon of Rome, Georgia; Mrs. G. C. Eidson of Palatka, Florida; and Mrs. Sue Hammons Bryner of Tifton, Georgia.

This year the English Club is proud to induct into the Copiah-Lincoln Literary Hall of Fame Dr. Ray Hammons, a dedicated agricultural researcher who has contributed much through writing to his chosen profession.

Reba Causey

Dear Papa,

Hi, it's me, Dumplin'. How have you been? It's been so long since I last saw you, since I last spoke to you. So I finally decided to write you, since you won't write me. But I know you'll probably never get this because the Postal Service can't deliver up there, unfortunately. I know they would if it were at all possible, but there are some things we just can't do.

But I guess the real reason I'm writing this is to inform you of some of the changes that have been made at your place since you left. Oh, I'm sure you already know about them but should you not, I feel you should, so let's tour the place. Just imagine that you're there again at your place in Liberty, Mississippi, sitting on the front porch like you always did. The porch is still the same except there are more paint stains after that last paint job! There's a porch swing now — that was Momma's idea — she loves that swing.

Going inside, you see the living room hasn't changed nor has the front bedroom, except that Mom got rid of that lumpy mattress on the bed and replaced it. Trust me, the bed sleeps a whole lot better. Nothing has changed in the dining room, except for the twin bed that serves as a couch and the refrigerator that you don't have to tie the door shut. The middle bedroom is the same but there's a new bed in your room. Uncle Charles is responsible for that though.

The kitchen, you'll love the kitchen. The table sits where the wood-burning stove used to sit. There's a nice, new counter and plenty of new cabinets. I remember how you used two huge pans to wash dishes in. I guess, I really remember Momma washing dishes but I know you did it that way too. Well, you may not like this but the kitchen has running water. You never were much for technology.

But we don't have to walk out to the bathroom to use the faucet now. That's another thing, the bathroom. Nothing can be done about your putting it on the back porch, but remember the screening around the porch? Uncle Charles and Davis (Applejack) replaced the screen with windows and covered the old wood with that sweet-smelling Western Cedar. It's not as cold back there in winter now. In the bathroom, the tub has been converted into a shower, the walls have been painted and your newspaper insulation has been made a little less conspicuous.

Oh, I forgot, remember that wall in your bedroom that you let all of us kids draw and write on, well Uncle Charles painted over it. I didn't think you would like that. The house has change for the better but I wish I could say the same for the outside.

Outside, the fence surrounding the backyard has aged, where it once was strong it is now weak. The pens beside the house, that you kept your dogs in have been over-run with weeds. Mr. Huff, who leases some of the land around the house took care of that though. He cleaned it out and put some of his dogs in there to scare the deer away. But it's been a long time since it was last used. Over there is the old well, it looks like an old pipe that has been driven into the

ground. Now it is covered only by an old hubcap, with a huge rock on it to weight it down. My brother and I sunk many a rock in that well. We loved to hear the rock fall, to end in a low "kerploosh" that echoed in the bottom of the well. Let's go to the back lot now.

A lot here has changed, there's the chicken house just rotting away with each passing day. There's the pump house, over-run with rats. Momma tells us never to go in it because now she must turn the pump on with a long stick due to the rat problem. Look over there, see that grassless mound of packed dirt, that's where the old smokehouse used to be. I dimly remember the smokehouse; it collapsed a long time ago. Back there is where the outhouse used to stand; all that's left of it is the old tin roof. If we follow that path over there, that was cut by the cattle you used to own, we'll end up in the barn lot.

Ah, the barn, watch that first step under the eaves, it's still as muddy as it ever was. Up that ladder to the right was the old hay loft. It took a lot of guts for me to climb that old ladder and go up there. What fun we had when we were up there, chasing the chickens who roosted on the old beams. But no one goes up there now, the boards are all rotting away, it's not safe at all anymore. Look, there's your old saddle, it's still hanging up in this hall right where you left it, hasn't been moved since the day you put it there. At times I think it's waiting for you to come back and take it down and get it back into shape again. Does it know that you'll never return to it? The pens to the right hold nothing but hens who lay their eggs in the abandoned food troughs. On the other side, the closed in, room-like stalls hold nothing but equipment, hay and corn, I think. I haven't seen their contents in a long time. In the shed beside the barn your old tractor sits being reduced, slowly to a pile of rusty, dust. Now, we can cross the front lot in front of the supply shack; that won't be around much longer either. Someone took your picture in front of that shack when you were still able to get around well. The picture is in a photo album in the house. Upon leaving the lot we are now on the driveway; it's still gravel as always. I remember your letting us shoot firecrackers here. It was so much fun.

Things have changed so much since you've left. We still go there often as if we are visiting you. Perhaps maybe we are. Maybe we are visiting your spirit. This Tuesday, December the sixth, you will have been gone ten years. Has it been so long? Your Liberty seems to say so, the place is so lonely and isolated; I wonder sometimes what will eventually become of it. But until then I will still enjoy walking in the woods, fighting with briars, flying kites in the pasture, shooting the rifles at the pond, and riding the go-cart all over the place.

Well, I really must be going, say hello to Mama for me, I wish I could have met her. But I know I will someday. Be good and don't tell the Boss-Man how to run things, but knowing you, you've done that already. Until next time ...

Love,
Dumplin'
Momma
Sugarfoot &
Applejack

Karen Carr

The warm covers lie thick and heavy on me, but this is the one morning I am not tempted to stay in bed. I wake up with excitement and eagerness to see what is waiting for me downstairs. My sister and I usually awake about the same time and try futilely to wake my sleeping brother. He groggily staggers out of bed, mumbling something about getting up too early and wanting to go back to bed. As I shuffle down the stairs, I notice the fire glowing in the dim light of the early morning, giving off an aroma of apples and oranges hung in the toe of the stocking. There is a subdued excitement in the air which causes our hearts to beat faster and our eyes to glow.

My mother awakes and walks to the kitchen to grind coffee beans in the electric grinder. The whirring blades crunching the dried beans sound like an electric drill boring into gravel, giving you a feeling of being touched by a live wire. She prepares the coffee and quickly makes a pan full of biscuits to put into the warm oven. At first my brother, sister, and I self-consciously begin to distribute the gifts from underneath the tree. The tree is decorated completely with white, glittering decorations and tiny white lights that look like a million fireflies in the night. The piquant odor of cedar and spice fill the air. The mysterious packages reflecting the glow of the lights intrigue us so that we begin to rapidly pass out the gifts amid laughter and shrieks of surprise. By this time, we have lost our caution, and bows and scraps of paper are being tossed carelessly all over the floor. Suddenly, smells of buttery biscuits and groans of the coffee pot call us to the kitchen. As the breakfast begins to tone down our stirred emotions, we reluctantly return to the disorderly jumble. The magical place that earlier was filled with story-book enchantment is now just a room left with signs of chaos. As we begin the commonplace task of picking up the torn and crushed paper and stacking our packages, we have a melancholy feeling of the Christmas that is passing. Yet, as we reflect upon the morning's events, the child in us is already anticipating the Christmas to come.

My First Love

Anita Channell

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Can you remember the exact time and place you first fell in love? I can. The momentous occasion was June 14, 1988, at Copiah-Lincoln Junior College, 6:13 P.M.

As I was leaving the dorm for a basketball practice, I noticed him in the parking lot. What a body! What style! He had a glow that appealed to everyone. I couldn't believe my eyes. It was love at first sight.

Over the next couple of months, we became very close. We shared many moments together especially on Friday and Saturday nights. My friends said we were a cute pair. My girlfriends couldn't believe my parents approved our relationship.

Being with him had its bad moment. One Friday night we went to the homecoming game at school. I have never been more scared in my whole life. We had an accident when a tire blew out, and we ran into a ditch. When I finally got stopped, I realized I wasn't hurt, but I could tell he was injured. I didn't know how serious it was at that time. My only thoughts were, "Oh, my God! What have I done to him? My very first time out with him alone and... and... My God, have I killed him?"

My mind flashed back to the things I remembered about him. Whenever we were in a crowd, he was the center of attention. Girls couldn't keep their hands off him. Even the boys had great admiration for him. He made me feel special when we went "cruising" on the weekends. "Have I marred his body for life? My God! What have I done?"

He entered the hospital. During the two-day stay, the extent of his injuries was determined not to be fatal. The doctor devoted his full attention and professionalism to his recovery. Tender loving care on my part helped him through this traumatic experience. My heart began to beat normally again. I still wondered if he would ever forgive me.

The accident was soon forgotten, and my life seemed to be going somewhere. We went to basketball practice together. One evening on the way home we took the back road. I should have remembered my mother saying, "Don't drive the back road. It is crooked and narrow. You might have another accident." We made it home O.K. I thought everything was fine. My mother found out the next day and grounded me that weekend. We didn't get to spend any time together.

Since June 14th when we first met I have experienced many things with him. I also learned a lot about life, too. For if you ever meet my first love, you would understand why. You would fall in love with him, too, because everyone loves my Classic, 1966, Springtime-yellow, Mustang.

Katrina H. Castilaw

Author's notes: Mr. Hale is a street-wise character. If he speaks in sentence fragments it is an intentional method of enhancing his character. It is not a mistake on the part of the author.

Cast: **Mr. Dev Hale** (hippist of the hip)
 Gabriel (butler-type character; similar to Mr. Belvadere)
 Bridget Bishop (non-speaking character)
 Ligeia (wails constantly)
 Rowena (laughs constantly)
 Bartleby (speaks in monotone voice)
 Dame Winkle (chronic nagger)
 Major Molineux (blubbering victim of Dame Winkle's temper)
 Beatrice Rappaccini (non-speaking character)

Setting: Pearly Gates

Time: Infinity

Act I

Mr. Hale: Paradise - Gate 7. Yeah, this is it. I wonder where ole Gabe is!? He's supposed to meet me here with the key.

Gabriel: (approaching from behind) Mr. Hale, I presume?

Mr. Hale: Hey, Gabe, 'bout time you got here, buddy! Hey, man, like that suit! I had one similar a while back, but I got careless once fanning the flames and singed the hem. Bummer!

Gabriel: I'm sure.

Mr. Hale: Well, dude, no time to waste. Got an appointment with the Big Man in about thirty minutes. I thought I'd come early and glimpse at my prospects. I hope I get some good ones today! Man, it's getting boring down there - mass murderers, rapists and physical abusers are just out! Just last week I said to myself, "Dev, old man, it's time to redecorate this place."

Gabriel: Yes, I can see the problem. This way, sir. (Gabriel points toward the right and proceeds in that direction. Mr. Hale follows, copying Gabriel's walking style and gestures.)

Mr. Hale: (Mockingly) "This way, sir." Man, you gotta loosen up! In my neighborhood they just call me Doctor Death. No need for that "sir" stuff...(voice fades as they leave)

Act II

Setting: Book of Man's Created Souls

Time: Infinity

Mr. Hale: (voice fading back in) ...yep, took him two weeks to figure that one out. Well, here we are! (rubs hands together gleefully) Man o' man, do I feel lucky today! Let me see the roster! (Mr. Hale eagerly snatches from Gabriel a tablet which Gabriel had removed from the outside of a giant book. Gabriel rolls his eyes. As Mr. Hale flips through the file Gabriel retrieves a key from his pocket and unlocks a gigantic padlock holding the book closed. Gabriel then opens the book and the two proceed in the interior of the book is made up of a hall of many rooms. These rooms are the waiting-rooms of created souls who are waiting to be judged. (Mr. Hale whistles in awe.) Man, it looks bad for the knights-in-white today, Gabe, ole buddy! Looks like America has done it to you again. Good thing about American writers - always consistent. Why, I remember back in England, everyday I had to struggle to get anybody to write decent material. They always wanted to write about divine power, the beauty of nature, or everlasting love. Yuck! The most fun I had with those bozos was during the Black Plague. But Americans, now Americans are something else. Death - that's their big subject, and tormented souls, of course. You know - the real meaty stuff. Yep I love those Americans!

Gabriel: Yes, I can see what you mean. This way, sir. (Gabriel manipulates Mr. Hale toward Room 1. Inside Bridget Bishop sits in heavenly surroundings.)

Mr. Hale: All right, let's see what we got here. (Flips to page in roster) Oh, wow. (sarcastically) Be still my heart. I mean, get real, Gabe. Bridget Bishop, what a joke! I don't stand a snowball's chance at home of getting her - too goody-goody. That was her whole problem, man. See, all those people down there knew that. They felt inferior - you know "low." Can you imagine someone always telling you you're doing something wrong, and you can't argue with them because you know they're right? Bummer! That's why they had to take her out, see? She was just too good. Man, don't waste my time on this mess! I want to get on to the good stuff. (Mr. Hale flips around and walks to the next room. Gabriel follows with a look of distress.)

Gabriel: Mr. Hale, please... (He tries to interrupt Mr. Hale's course of intent but fails.)

Mr. Hale: Oh, whoa! Oh, man this is heavy! (Mr. Hale leans into the room, bracing himself on the doorjamb. To audience:) Get a load of these chicks! (Two women are seen sitting together, staring intently through a hole in the floor. The lighter of the two women seems to be enjoying the view. She's continuously laughing. The darker of the two women, however, seems to be greatly distressed. Cries of intense sadness are overpowering from this woman.) This has gotta be some of Poe's work - my main man! Let's see. (flips to page in



CAROLYN RUDDER

roster) "Ligeia" - oh, cool, I remember hearing about this dame. It seems she messed her husband up something good. Even after her death she had him doing opium and alcohol. I always had high hopes for her. Man, she's gotta stop that mess, though. Cries of pain are great, but crying like that is something else. (winces) She ain't a bad looking broad, though. Maybe I can get her in time to drag her to the annual Demon Dance next October. She'd be a good compliment for my red tux. Who else we got here? (again flips through roster) "Rowena" - man, don't know about her. I mean, I'll admit it was fun messing with her mind when she was all drugged out on that medicine, but just look at her! She looks like an angel! Yuck! I wouldn't know where to put her in my redecoration scheme. Naw, ya'll can keep her. Who are they watching? (Mr. Hale walks to the hole and looks through. Neither woman recognizes his presence. Through the hole he sees the women's husband in an insane asylum.) That's what I figured. (Mr. Hale looks at Rowen with a satisfied look.) "He who laughs last....," huh, babe? (To Gabriel:) I'll tell you what, Gabe, when their husband gets up here give me a ring.

Gabriel: I'll make sure of it.

Mr. Hale: (looks at watch) Man, we gotta hurry! Just ten more minutes. I was late last month and lost nine souls.

Gabriel: I can see where that would be a problem.

Mr. Hale: Cute, Gabe. Oh, look your halo's slipping. (Receives look of disdain) Hey, watch out! (Mr. Hale points to the feet of Gabriel. Gabriel looks down alarmingly. Mr. Hale bring up his hand and twicks Gabriel's nose.) Gotcha! (laughs hysterically) Still can't catch it in time, can ya, Gabe?! I've been pulling that same trick on you since we were in Halo Training together! And here I thought angels were supposed to be bright Light bright! (continues laughing)

Gabriel: Yes, that was very amusing.

Mr. Hale: Aw, loosen up. It was just a joke. (returns to business) What's next?

Gabriel: I believe a Mr. Bartleby is next.

Mr. Hale: Okay! (stops outside Bartleby's room) What's this? (examines roster carefully. To Bartleby:) Oh, man did you screw up! (To audience:) Get this - Gabe here told him it was his turn to be the Big Man, and guess what he said - "I prefer not to." Yeah, you knew that already, didn't you. Smart people! (To Bartleby: Hey, Bart, wanta come home with me, where it's nice and warm?

Bartleby: I would prefer not to.

Mr. Hale: Heck, man, nobody wants to go. (Referring to roster:) Says here you only got three more days to make up your mind and then you're out! Better

decide while you can.

Bartleby: I would prefer not to.

Mr. Hale: Indecision - I love it! Okay, bud, looks like I'll see you later then. (Walks to next room rather swiftly. Gabriel follows. Mr. Hale looks into the room. From inside a woman's nagging voice and a man's subdued blubbing are heard.) Hey, I see ya'll have gone co-ed now. What's the occasion?

Gabriel: I believe Dame Winkle volunteered to address Major Molineux's rather outlandish dressing apparel. (Simultaneously Dame Winkle and Major Molineux are heard, although Major Molineux's voice is barely perceptible.)

Winkle: What do you mean coming up here dressed like that? You men are all alike. Lazy bunch of slobs. I've never seen anyone...

Major: (As though he doesn't hear a word Dame Winkle is yelling at him:) He was right there. He looked me right in the eyes. I just don't understand. What did I ever do wrong?...

Mr. Hale: (rather ruefully) Yeah, I guess she did! (jots a few notes on a pad. He then proceeds to the last room. Gabriel notices this fact.)

Gabriel: (in low tones) Praise God!

Mr. Hale: What was that?!

Gabriel: Nothing, sir, just clearing my throat.

Mr. Hale: (doubtfully) Yeah. (Looks at roster) "Beatrice Rappaccini" - what a name! Let's see. Oh, wow - a cross skull. (To audience in Mr. Roger's voice:) Now we know what that means, don't we boys and girls! Poison. Can you say "poison"? I knew you could. (Laughs at his own joke. To Gabriel:) What timing! My poison pump got clogged last week and I haven't had a chance to get it fixed. (leans into room and takes a deep breath) Aahhh! Best air there is. I'll have to make a deal. I'll give ya'll the girl if I can have all the poison extract. (marks down more notes) Well, Gabe, I...

Announcer: Mr. Devil, Mr. Devil, come to the throne room, stat! Mr. Devil, Mr. Devil, come to the throne room, stat!

Mr. Hale (scowling at speaker) It's "Dev Hale." She mispronounces it every time. Does it on purpose, too. She never got over me dumping her for Jezebel. Why, she's probably the one who turned me in to the Big Guy! You, know the saying, "Hell hath no fury...." (glances at watch) Aw, heck, I'm gonna be late again. I'm probably two under by now. I'll be lucky if he doesn't deck me more than that. Michael caught me pouring propane on the judgement flame last

week. Well, Gabe, it was good seeing you again. Drop in when you get a chance. Get it? - "Drop in." (laughs at personal joke again)

Gabriel: I'm laughing inside. (At doubtful look:) Really! I'm an angel, I can't lie.

Mr. Hale: Why not? I did! (howls in laughter. Gasps:) Gotta go! Bye slips on shades. (Still laughing he turns and leaves, bent over in laughter, saying over and over "I did!")

Gabriel: (Scans rooms, closes book, and locks the lock. He starts to put the key in his pocket but changes his mind. He throws the key at the audience.) Here, you keep it. You're really the one that opened it in the first place. You people are all alike. You read before you think. Now all these poor souls that are up here stand to win an eternal vacation with that! (Work whistle sound. Gabriel pulls off his halo and unstraps his wings. Loping off stage he mutters:) "Gotcha again, Gabe, ole buddy. Loosen up. Your halo's slipping..." (He turns to the audience and says: I need a raise.

Mr. Hale: (In an echoing voice:) I did ...too! (evil laugh ends play).

MICROCOSM Award

Aimee Harris

We resist the urges
that well up and
make our stomachs
feel full of
black acid.

We keep our eyes down
so we cannot see the
black clouds forming
over our hearts,
filling them with thunderous
tremors.

We hold our tongues and
lock our jaws so we
will not spill the river of
fear and emotion swimming
within our souls.

We come together for a
single moment, then turn
and part, not looking back,
carrying the burden
of goodbye until
hello comes again.

MICROCOSM Award

The Horizon Of Epiphany

Aimee Harris

The air is tiny frozen daggers
against your throat and lungs as
your eyes cry to be protected.
The wind breaks through your
London Fog.

But you stand, unsheltered,
looking at the raging sea in
the last rays of today's sun.
In the west a lone seagull
moves toward his home, leaving
you alone in the grand
fierceness of twilight.



Allen Cooper

The valley of the Moon Lake is a two-hundred-acre lake in southern Kentucky. The lake was named after the valley that it's nestled in. At the far north end of the lake is a remote and dangerous place called Black Duck Bayou.

The weather in late December is cold and icy and the lake is a haven for migrating Wood Ducks, Teals, Mallards, Osprey, Bald Eagles and Black Ducks. Even though the Black Duck isn't the most sought after game bird, it is considered the most wonderful bird of all to Trapp Clegg, a modern-day hermit and his black Labrador, Josie.

Trapp, glassy-eyed and toothless, goes into town once a month and stocks up on hunting supplies and liquor. Making his own moonshine has become too big a job and too risky. Trapp is a drunk and a reckless hunter. It is rumored that he's killed three men by accident and wounded several on purpose. He is considered an outlaw and dangerous by the people of the Valley of the Moon.

Every morning Trapp and Josie walk out to the dock and get into the old, green aluminum boat and Trapp starts the Evinrude outboard that always works when nothing else will. Trapp always brings along two bottles of whiskey and a bone from the hind-quarter of a deer for Josie. He picks up Andy Spiller, his and Josie's only friend. Andy is stout and tall and has hair as black as a raven. Andy is thirty years old and lives with his mother, Mama Sam. Mama Sam is very dependent on her brute moron son.

The half moon scatters a weak light on the bayou. Andy holds a lantern while Trapp maneuvers the boat deep into some tall reeds to wait for a large flock of Black Ducks that come to feed on a nearby rice field. Andy sits in the front of the boat eating from a bag of pork skins. Josie switches her shoulder muscles, thumps her tail on the bottom of the boat and watches the sky.

Trapp lifts his cap and scratches his head and says, "Andy, I feel worse than a turkey on Thanksgiving Eve. I must of drunk too much last night."

"TTTTTrapp, you aaaalways ssssssay tttthat," stutters Andy.

Andy is unable to make a living because nobody but Trapp will put up with his handicap and ignorance. He takes Trapp's furs, fish and feathers into town once a week to be traded. Andy is strong and helpful to Trapp, who is only sixty years old, but has the body of an eighty-year-old man. The booze is rotting him inside and out.

As they wait for the sun to rise, Trapp says, "Boy, we sure did see a lot of ducks yesterday, Ain't no game warden ever gonna come in this part of the bayou. Right

"RRRRRight."

"This part of the bayou belongs to you, me and Josie."

"YYYYep. TThat's RRRRRRRRight."

The sun, orange as a pumpkin, climbs above the horizon. Andy and Josie squat down and Trapp begins to blow raspy sounds through his feeding call. Black Ducks approach the boat.

Two minutes later Andy and Trapp are shooting so fast they are often caught firing their guns and hearing the familiar.....CLICK.....of a firing pin hitting an empty chamber.

After a bottle of whiskey and six bags of pork skins, another line of black crosses the sun. Neither Trapp nor Andy look up and see several flocks made up of about six to eight ducks to a flock.

Trapp begins to blow in his call, and Andy opens fire followed by Trapp's reckless rapid fire. Josie sits slobbering and ready to retrieve their kill.

"There's so many that we gonna have to let Josie go get the ones on land and shallow water. We'll get the ones on the ice," says Trapp.

Twenty minutes later Trapp leans over the edge of the boat; and before Andy can catch him, Trapp is in the bitter cold water. Andy panics and swings the boat away from Trapp instead of toward him.

"Help. Help, Andy. Hel..." Trapp disappears under the water for a few seconds. He comes back up cursing Andy through his freezing breath and hanging on tightly to the duck's neck.

Andy hands the stock end of the gun to Trapp. Trapp's numb finger catches on the trigger guard; it's all that's between him and the devil. His fingers, cold as death, can't feel the trigger and he accidentally pulls it as he had done on the last big drake. Andy's face is shattered away by lead shot. He's hurled backwards by the explosion and hits the choppy water. They both disappear into the dark water of Black Duck Bayou.

Josie barks and howls as if she is treeing a coon. The blood, the dead duck and both bodies are gone. All Josie finds is Trapp's hand-carved duck call and Andy's brown corduroy cap floating on the surface. She dives into the water and gathers the duck call and the cap into her mouth, and with a sharp whine she skillfully makes her way back through the rice field, the tall weeds and cattails to Mama Sam's house where Mama Sam is greasing a skillet for cornbread. She always has cornbread and wild game for them when they return from hunting.

Josie scratches against the wooden door. Mama Sam opens the door and Josie walks in alone. She drops the cap and duck call on the floor, shakes a thin film of glittering ice from her wet coat and stretches out by the fire.

From this day on nobody in the Valley of the Moon has to be scared of Black Duck Bayou or that Trapp Clegg might shoot them accidentally or on purpose.

Scholarship Award

Ironies in "Rappaccini's Daughter" and Beyond 19

Rebecca McSweyn

The many ironies in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter" help to reveal the true characteristics of Rappaccini and Giovanni. We get to know these characters so well we could speculate on how he would have continued his story. One thing is for sure it would have to contain irony. Hawthorne uses this tool through out his story.

One of the first ironies is the overall plan Rappaccini has for his garden and his most beautiful flower. He feels he has given his daughter Beatrice everything. Rappaccini has created a beautiful garden and protected her from all outside influences. Through her poisonous nature he has assured her continued presence in the garden. By protecting her, he has kept her from experiencing the thing she desires most: love. Beatrice says to her father, "I would fain have been loved, not feared."

Another ironic point is in Giovanni's desire to play God and do what he thinks is best for Beatrice which, ultimately leads to her death. His obsession to make Beatrice conform to society kills her. Giovanni feels Beatrice has missed out in life and he will be the one to rescue her. He wants to give her a new life and in the process takes away the only life she has. Giovanni's plan appears in his thoughts. "Besides," thought Giovanni, "might there not still be a hope of this returning within the limits of ordinary nature, and leading Beatrice, the re-deemed Beatrice, by the hand."

Ironically Giovanni's curiosity for Beatrice leads him into a web of poison he cannot escape. His compelling desire to free Beatrice makes him a prisoner of the garden himself. Through his efforts to free her, he imprisons himself: "Thou hast filled my veins with poison."

Baglioni's efforts to gain revenge and reveal Rappaccini's evil is ironic in that through Baglioni's actions he reveals his own evil nature. Baglioni's pride and desire to feel vindicated for past wrongs, hurts, even kills the innocent Beatrice. Baglioni's blinding obsession is evident in the final words of this story, "Rappaccini! Rappaccini! and this [Beatrice's death] is the upshot of your experiment!"

The most notable irony to me is that Giovanni has more poison in his nature than Beatrice. She is content in her surroundings. She has been educated by her father and has a natural talent for music and gardening. Giovanni is determined to remove Beatrice from her father and her surroundings. He never once considers becoming a part of her world, only of her conforming to his. To him, Beatrice is the forbidden fruit he must have. She had lived her life before as her father's obsession. Beatrice's words show that she realized this irony also, "O, was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?"

Now that we have examined the ironies let's consider for a moment that Hawthorne didn't stop with Beatrice's death. Perhaps he would have continued like this:

At Baglioni's harsh words Rappaccini fell to the ground. For the first time he realized what he had done. Rappaccini loved his daughter, he had built his whole world around his science and his daughter.

At the very moment of Beatrice's death, the flower, which had been her sister, withered immediately. Giovanni called to Baglioni, "You knew the antidote



CHRISTY KILLINGSWORTH

would kill her and me had I drank it. I trusted you, and you betrayed me. Your science, not Rappaccini's, killed this innocent girl."

"I warned you of this," answered Baglioni, who then disappeared from the window.

Giovanni turned to Rappaccini who was still clutching Beatrice. It seemed odd to Giovanni; he had waited too late to try to give her the love she needed. Giovanni suddenly saw Rappaccini in a different light. Through his efforts to prove his worthiness as a scientist, he neglected his personal life. Rappaccini was as much a victim as his beloved Beatrice. Giovanni helped the doctor bury his daughter there in the garden. After a period of mourning for both of them, Giovanni and Rappaccini developed a friendship.

Beatrice's death and the death of the poisonous plant were too much for Rappaccini. His life was meaningless; he lost interest in his garden and withdrew from everything. Until one day, his former employer Professor Peti from the medical department of the University of Padua came to visit. Peti told him of the suicide death of Professor Baglioni and somehow persuaded Rappaccini to return to the University and resume his research. Giovanni's poisonous nature imprisoned him to the garden. He was left alone. Unlike Beatrice, Giovanni was not content in the garden. He knew of the outside world and missed the people and places. But he did have his writing, and he wrote daily of his experiences in the garden. Rappaccini had taught him all he knew of the plants. On the grave of Beatrice grew a most unusual plant, one unknown even to Rappaccini. Giovanni cared for it lovingly each day. It replaced Beatrice as the most beautiful flower. Months passed and the special flower grew and consumed the entire garden. One day while in the garden, Giovanni noticed a butterfly. It landed on his sleeve, and in an attempt to spare it, he held his poisonous breath. The butterfly persisted.

Finally, when Giovanni could no longer hold his breath, he gasped for air. The butterfly was still alive! How could this be? Was this some special kind of insect? Giovanni had to know. As he searched wildly through the garden for another insect, the beautiful plant at last had conquered the tall walls and leapt over the top. Giovanni ended his search with the discovery of an unsuspecting spider. He blew his breath on it. It survived: he must be cured. How could this be? Beatrice had reached from the grave to set him free, and through the plant, she reached the outside.

In life, as in death, there are lessons for the next generation. Cigarettes have been, and still are, a big enticing adult “no-no” to most kids when going through growing pains. For my friends and me it was no exception. When we were about twelve years old, we stole some cigarettes from our parents, and set out on the great adult adventure of smoking. From the beginning, I was a complete failure — never could inhale — so ended my smoking career.

Time marched on and my own child soon reached the magic age of twelve. One day word came to me that she too had taken up smoking. Suddenly, the solemn thought hit me “like Grandmother, like grand-daughter.”

Later that evening, as she was riding toward me on her horse, Patches, I called out, “Sweetheart, could I talk to you for a few minutes?”

After she dismounted and we sat on the porch, I said, “I love you, and I’ve heard that you are smoking.”

She was silent.

Then I continued, “I’d like to tell you a little story that you might ponder over; and perhaps the day will come that you will be blessed with children of your own and may want to pass this story on to them.

“Once there was a beautiful, willowy twelve-year-old girl named Juanita, known to her friends as “Nit.” She had deep dark brown eyes and thick long flowing hair to match. She was as light-hearted as she was light-footed.

“Nobody knows just when she picked up her first cigarette, nor why her strict father said that he had rather her smoke at home than sneak off and hide. And smoke she did — puff after puff after puff. For a twelve year old, that made her a celebrity of sorts among her friends; they could come over and visit and smoke along with her to their hearts’ content.

“Hand in hand with smoking, she loved the out-of-doors, the fresh air, the sun beaming down on her face. She loved the birds and the animals, and she especially loved to return to the camp way down on the bayou as often as possible just to be in the outdoors where she grew up as a young child.

“As the years passed by, she married the man with whom she had fallen in love. They made their little nest and managed to raise and nurture most of their eight children during the early part of their lives, without too much trouble. As time continued the children grew; her coughing spells worsened, and her hurried trips to the hospital became more frequent. One day her heart was forever pierced when her second son suddenly took sick and died in the summer following his high school graduation. But through it all, she hadn’t forsaken her cigarettes, and they held onto to her just as she held on to them. Even as her health was giving way, they were still there for her.

“Her steps weren’t very sure now, nor was she able to inhale as much of the fresh outdoor air that she so loved. No longer was she able to give of herself to her younger children the precious time they needed during their struggling teenage years. Her grandchildren were a joy to her, but she could hold them only for a very short time. Sometimes the youngest, a two year old, would run down the hallway to her grandmother’s bedroom when she heard her coughing and gasping for air. She’d crawl up on her bed and start patting her on her back, just

as she'd seen others do so many times before.

"Ironically, a year earlier she'd given up her cigarettes when she saw an ash tray made in the shape of a diseased lung. No longer tied to her cigarettes, she was now a slave to the oxygen tank next to her bed. More and more often now she had visions of her son or sometimes of herself floating up and up. Had she wanted one, she could no longer even hold a cigarette.

"You see, Sweetheart, in just a short time the cigarettes had an iron grip, and they began the process of draining the life out of a once-vibrant woman. Emphysema took its toll on your grandmother. As she exhaled, her breath left her body and mounted on the eagle's wings and traveled on and on into eternity. No longer did she have to struggle for fresh air."

ORANGES ARE ACTUALLY YELLOW

Fritz Games

You may not believe it, but

oranges are actually yellow.

I tell you this, fellow,
because you are my friend.

If you walk down the aisle of long committment,
(with your pocket-picking pal)
well...

it will be a long trail ahead.

Paper flies in the wind.
When the money is gone,
she will be gone.

Oranges are actually yellow.

MICROCOSM Award

Chuck Hefner

At one-o'clock in the morning Tom Parker, a guard at the armory, was about to finish his shift. This would be the last shift he would work because he was going to meet the big boss the next day. He was relieved that his job was over.

The next day at the office of the United States Central Agency on Maple Street in Miami, Zack Wyld, chief agent, was sitting at his desk reading reports of the latest escapades of his enemy Marcelino. He was also wondering how he managed to get the tough assignments, calling for daredevil and narrow escapes. His thoughts were interrupted by the ringing of the phone. He prayed it was Chip, fellow agent and best friend, with some helpful news about the case.

"I'll meet you in one hour at the pier, Chip."

"O.K., Zack, I'll see you in an hour."

On arriving at the pier, Chip told Zack which boat belonged to Tom Parker, and he was able to put a tracer on it. Then they waited on Zack's fishing boat for Parker to board his boat.

That afternoon Tom Parker came to his boat, not realizing he was being watched. Zack and Chip watched as he pulled out of the harbor. They waited until he was out of sight and then turned on the tracer. They followed at a safe distance.

"I'm finally going to get them. Marcelino is the lowest form of life, selling guns to the Communists, and Parker was his number one thief at the armory. I wonder what he would say if he knew we'd been watching him for weeks, so he could lead us to Marcelino. It will be a bonus if Manuel Cortez, the leader of the Communist group, is with them," Zack tells Chip.

"We're getting close to the island, Zack. You had better get ready."

They followed Parker to Coral Reef Key where Marcelino's home is located. They could not get close to the island for fear of being seen and because of the coral reef.

"It's too bad this beautiful island, a true paradise, is the home of a crook," said Zack.

"Good luck."

"Thanks, I'll need it."

Zack jumped into the water and headed to the island. Chip stayed on the boat and pretended to fish, although he was very alert.

Meanwhile on the island Manuel Cortez, a Communist from a small country in Central America, had just arrived.

"Hello, Marcelino."

"Good afternoon, Manuel, welcome to my island."

"I hope everything is going as planned, and the guns are ready," Manuel said in broken English.

"Yes, Manuel, the guns are ready for shipment, but maybe you would like a demonstration first."

"That would be wonderful, Marcelino."

On another part of the island Zack was hiding his scuba gear in the rocks. He started to go through the palm trees toward the house when he heard something. He stopped and watched as a guard walked in his direction. Zack jumped him



BRIAN FURR

from behind and knocked him out. Zack made it through the woods dodging trap wires and booby traps until he reached an electric fence. He managed to climb a tree by the fence and jumped over.

At the same time Marcelino was demonstrating one of the weapons. "Go ahead with demonstration, Tom. Watch the plane, Manuel." Tom fired a rocket and destroyed a passing plane.

"Very good, Marcelino. That was no ordinary machine gun. Are the rockets for me also?"

"For ten million more they are."

"I'll take them and all you can get in the future," answered Manuel.

"Let's go inside until it is time for dinner," said Marcelino.

Zack sneaked inside the building where the weapons were stored. He set explosives in the building and in the house. As he was making his way out of the house, he was spotted. He tried to run but was captured by the guards. This is the end, he thought.

"Mr. Marcelino, we found this man sneaking around the house," stated one of the guards.

"So, Zack, we meet again, and you thought you could stop me from selling guns. Well, you didn't and you will never get in my way again. There's no way out this time for the Central Agency's top man. Guard, shoot this man."

The guard and Zack went outside and Zack looked at his watch: only one minute until the explosives would go off.

"I don't guess you would let me go."

"No."

Catching the guard by surprise, Zack grabbed his gun and shot him. He ran toward the cliff and jumped into the ocean just as the buildings exploded.

Sitting on the boat, Chip thought the whole world had exploded and his friend along with it. He started the boat and knew he had to look for Zack, regardless of the coral. He found Zack sitting on the beach waiting.

"About time you showed up."

"I was enjoying the fireworks," offered Chip, trying to appear undisturbed.

"I don't think we'll have any more trouble with those guys," Zack said with a laugh.

"007 couldn't have done it better. Let's go home, Zack."

Karen Elizabeth Redd

The cat walks along in perfect grace
Searching for that comfortable place.

A place in which he'll sit and sleep,
Or dance around at someone's feet.

The cat has a coat so shiny and bright
That glows in the dark and catches the light.

The cat has a purr that's a soothing drug
When he crawls to your shoulder and gives you a hug.

The comfort and pleasure that a cat provides
Quickly comes to mind as he playfully hides.

The cat is a most splendid creature,
With his person-like traits that accent every feature.



DAN MCKENZIE

Cindy Crews

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter" and Herman Melville's "Bartleby" are note worthy short stories because of the multiple meanings both stories have. Both stories stand up well to comparisons with the reader's personal life and to comparisons to each other and to other short stories.

In a way, if we look deep inside of ourselves, we all have certain characteristics of Beatrice and of Bartleby but we just might not want to openly admit it to everyone. Hawthorne shows us through Beatrice that we all need to be loved or be shown love sometimes during our lives by other people besides our parents. Beatrice cries near the end of the story her need for love,"... for, Giovanni, believe it, though my body be nourished with poison, my spirit is God's creature, and craves love as its daily food."

Poor Beatrice is either loved too much by her father or obsessed by her father's love of "fatal science" for he purposely made it impossible for her to ever be able to leave her Eden. Beatrice is obviously a very lonely lady, living without any kind of relationships with other people. But this kind of life is not Beatrice's life by choice—her father had chosen her fate by nursing her with poison thus causing her to be poison, poisoning and killing anything she comes near.

We are much like Beatrice for we all need to feel loved by others. It is a little easier for most of us because we are not trapped within a small garden in which no one can enter because we would poison them by our breath. But we do allow others — our parents and our close friends — to build walls around us in efforts to protect us from dangers.

And Melville lets the reader see that Bartleby is a very lonely man who will not let anyone get close to him. He always has his guard up and will not let anyone tear the walls down that he has obviously been building for many years. We learn this at the end of the story when we find out that Bartleby for years had worked in the Dead Letter Office in Washington. Knowing he had worked there helps to support the fact that he is a cold and lonely man who has made himself numb to everything including the contents of the letters which may have contained, "pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities."

I find it much easier to relate to Bartleby than to Beatrice because I believe we all have a tendency to build walls around ourselves or wear masks so that people can not hurt us. We all probably feel if we do not let people get too close to us then they can not hurt us as much.

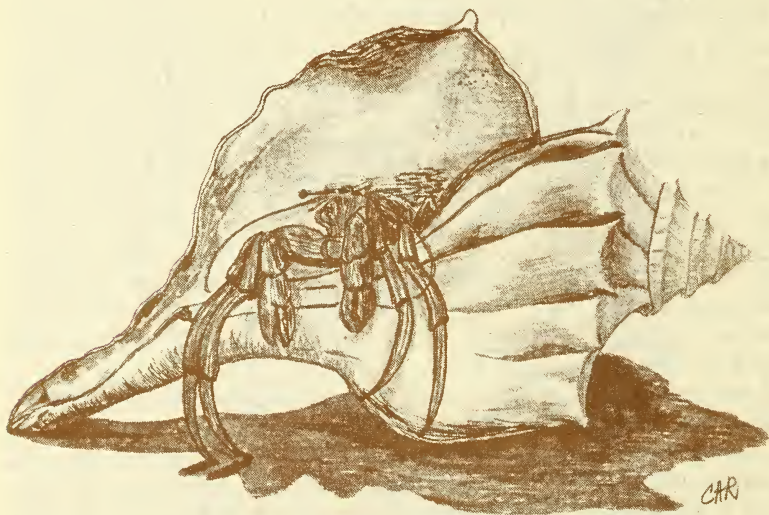
We can see both Beatrice and Bartleby are very much alike even though their situations are very different. If we were to look at the differences, we can see that Bartleby, unlike Beatrice, has a choice about how he is going to live. Bartleby could have chosen to communicate with other people, like with Nipper, Turkey, Ginger Nut and especially the lawyer, to have some sort of relationships with others. But instead of taking the lawyer's extended helping hand, Bartleby decides to be like Prufrock, a character from T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," who decides to live all alone rather than taking a chance and perhaps "disturbing the universe." Bartleby never takes a chance on anything; he always "prefers not to." Beatrice does not have any option on how she would

live her life, for she does not build a wall around herself shutting others out: she already had the wall built around her. Beatrice, I believe, would have been a very out-going person if she had been given the opportunity Bartleby has. Beatrice like Marty, a character from a Paddy Chayevsky play, decides to take a chance when she accepts the antidote Giovanni offers. What has she got to lose — an unhappy life void of love and filled with loneliness. Beatrice takes a chance to “disturb the universe.” Ironically when Beatrice decides to take that chance on love, it destroys her. And Bartleby prefers to not take such a risk and prefers to stay lonely and secluded within the walls of his own making, the walls of the lawyer's office, and finally the walls of the tomb.

Both Beatrice and Bartleby die but there is one difference: one dies knowing that she had felt love, known joy, and had hope for a fuller life if the antidote could have worked. Bartleby, however, dies alone “huddled at the base of the wall ... his head touching the cold stones.” I believe Beatrice is the happier of the two for she at least participated in life, experiencing love and heartache.

Through these stories we can grow and learn about ourselves by the connections we make with the characters and their situations.

Second Place, MICROCOSM



CAROLYN RUDDER

Hugh Ferguson

Kids can be cruel. They may not mean to be or realize what they are doing but what they say or do to another child can leave a lasting impression. Some of us were ridiculed because of our physical appearance. Maybe it came because of poor grades in school. A speech impediment or one's clothes may get the wrong kind of attention. It always seemed to be something.

I remember very well my grade school days and one thing in particular that made me the subject of ridicule. For me it was my last name. How many of us have had our name changed to fit a rhyme or make a catchy phrase? My last name, Ferguson, seemed to be perfect for that. Kids would take the "son" off the end of my name and substitute it with "butt." This made my official playground name "Fergubutt." It sounds funny now, but to be called "Fergubutt" would set my fiery red-headed temper off, and generally a fight of some sort would ensue.

The only two children who wouldn't call me "Fergubutt" were my two best friends, Greg and Mark. Greg was the fattest boy in school, and he knew what it was to be taunted by the other children. Somehow, Greg would let me know that he knew what I felt like when they called me "that name." He would simply address me as "Bottom." "Bottom" was short for "Fergubottom." Whenever my little brother and I were dressed exactly alike, Greg would say, "There goes Big Bottom and Little Bottom."

Mark was the preacher's boy. He was always the most well-behaved student who made the best grades in the whole school. He was also the most popular and the best athlete. Mark never let his elite status go to his head, and he always acted like a true Christian.

One day during the noon recess we picked teams for our daily football game. Since we were using my football, I was one of the team captains. I always tried to pick Greg because he was the biggest blocker and Mark because he was the fastest runner. I managed to get both on my team that day. The opposing team captain, sensing the inevitable onslaught began to argue about fair sides. The argument became hotter and hotter. Then Mark grew impatient with me and yelled, "Fergubutt, you can't always have your way!" I was devastated. I couldn't believe my best friend had turned on me. I didn't even want my football when I left the game. The rest of the school day was spent in silent anguish and Greg even walked home with me in silence that day. Just before we got to my street I heard someone say "Fergie?" I turned around, and there was Mark with alligator tears streaming down his face. "It just slipped, Fergie. Everyone says it so much, but I didn't mean it. It just slipped. Please forgive me, and let's still be friends."

Throughout childhood many things happen that shape character and develop a sense of humor in all of us. I can look back at that experience with much fondness and loads of laughter. It's been over twenty years since that day, but I still consider Greg and Mark two of my best friends. As parents or as parents-to-be, I hope that we will go to great pains with our children in teaching them about name calling. I was fortunate. I had two good friends to help me cope with ridicule.

I found the letter in the old camel-back trunk. We had come from the graveyard where we had put my grandfather to rest. He had lived ninety-seven years which was ample time for the memories in his house to become old.

The moment I touched the letter I knew that it held special meaning for those who had read it first. The words were ordinary ones, but as I unfolded the yellowed pages the common quality contained within the short sentences melted my heart and brought to my mind once again the stories I had heard so many years ago.

The letter was to my grandparents from Uncle Leon, Pappa's middle son, who was at that time fighting the war in the Philippines.

Upon his return home after the war was over, Uncle Leon talked little about his life in the war but as time went on he was to tell us more. When he did begin telling us his stories the words he choose to use were alive and beautiful and vivid. As I held the letter I could remember him speaking to me with the darkness of the night between us as we sat with Momma and Pappa on the front porch in the coolness of a June night, the kerosene lamps out.

The lightning bugs blinked and sparkled while he spoke in his soft Southern way, "The jungle was steamy. The fall of darkness did nothing to lessen the heat of the day. That night was unlike others I had to endure in that hell. There had been other nights when I nearly froze following a day of torrential rainfall which often rode on wings of gale winds that sometimes reached eighty miles per hour.

"I had been lying under the cover of the dense foliage for what seemed like days. Yet only hours. I felt the sweat trickle down my back and I thought how the hand of fate had intervened in my life. God is surely the supreme all-knowing deity that you taught me to love, Pappa, but that night I wondered why He sent me to this stinking jungle."

I felt Momma's hand patting Uncle Leon's and I watched a lightning bug blink on and off above Pappa's head. I heard Uncle Leon's voice over my thoughts for I knew the story about how fate had sent him to that jungle.

During the early part of World War II Uncle Leon had been stationed at a camp in California where he was an MP. He didn't really like his job for much of it was spent in picking up drunk soldiers off the streets of town and taking them back to camp. Even then, Uncle Leon had no tolerance for people who wasted good time on such things as getting drunk.

It was the day before his company was to be shipped out to North Africa that fate took hold of his life for he was hospitalized with a congestive lung condition. Upon his release from the hospital he was placed in an outfit of mule skinnners. His job was to train the beasts to pack heavy loads of arms and munitions up mountainous terrain to aid in the fighting. As it turned out the mule skinnners were disbanded, and the mules were shipped to India for use as food. As for Uncle Leon he was one of the select few picked for the special training, the elite Army's 6th Rangers. His training was grueling, but he made it through and became what the Army considered its best.

I looked down at the letter in my hand and I heard my small voice saying, "Uncle Leon, don't be so sad, you are here with us now and I want to hear more

about the jungle. Were there tigers? Did you see one?

Watching a lightning bug land on the window ledge he continued to remember, "No, I didn't see a tiger, but I saw something far worse, the enemy. That day our objective was a Japanese prison camp on Luson Island near Cabanatuan. I remember that mission better than any other. By that time we were down to thirty-nine men but we were going to take the prison camp by surprise, if we could, and get the prisoners safely to the Marine carriers anchored five miles out to sea.

"Hiding there waiting for the light of dawn I could not keep the memories of only a few hours ago from flooding my mind. I could see the blackness of the storm as the landing craft pilot let the door down for disembarkation. Standing there waiting to step off and wade ashore I could see Lloyd, my best buddy, standing in front of me with a forty-pound flame thrower slung across his back. Lloyd was the first off the craft and as he disappeared below the surface of the water all I could do was to stand there horrified as the wind whipped his name away from my mouth. I never saw him again and his body was never recovered because what the pilot had thought to be beach turned out to be coral reef and we were several hundred yards from shore.



PATRICIA KILLINGSWORTH

"After finally landing on the island, using darkness for cover, it was a twenty-mile march to the camp. It was slow going for it was uphill and some of the most brutal terrain I had ever seen. It took us six hours to reach the perimeter of the camp. Then we had only to lay low and wait for the first hint of light and the right moment to begin the rescue. We knew that if we could catch the enemy off-guard we would have a better chance of getting the prisoners out.

"I was lying there thinking about the Marines backing us up and wondering if we would reach the landing crafts with all the prisoners when suddenly I was jolted out of my ponderings by a movement nearby. Someone gave a signal and the chunking sound of sub-machine gun fire filled my ears as every muscle in my body tensed for action. The fight was fast and furious and it was only a matter of minutes until we were inside the gates looking into the startled eyes of the prisoners.

"What a pitiful sight. Some of them were so thin I could see the outline of every bone in their bodies. But I had no time to stop and speculate about the condition

of the prisoners; we had to keep moving and pray they had enough strength left to make it to the beach.

"Time and flight were most important so the prisoners were hastily rounded up. Some could walk with help; others could walk on their own; several had to be carried. Most of them were close to death from starvation, but the elation of being free gave them a little strength.

"We moved them along as fast as we could. There were more than two-hundred of them and we had to stop to rest them frequently. It was during one of these stops that we saw a skinny little dog on a path close by. One of the freed prisoners who was a high-ranking British officer and had suffered cruel punishment saw the little dog and cried tears for its misery.

"Many hours later having boarded the ship again we found out the Marines had not been sitting idle while we were gone. The previous night with the help

of the Islanders, they had killed almost three-thousand Japanese who had tried a sneak attack on them. The sea was red with blood and mutilated bodies floated everywhere.

"Pappa, I thought more than once that night we'd never get out of that hellish war. Momma, I wrote you as soon as I got back to my quarters. Don't know if you got my letter but I wanted you to know we came out fine."

I looked up and saw my face in the mirror over the dresser. A tear hung momentarily suspended on the edge of one eye glistening like a lightning bug. I looked down at the letter again and read, "Dear Mother, We landed in the Philippines three days ahead of everyone else ... and Mother, it came out just fine."

I walked to the phone and dialed, "Uncle Leon? Guess what I found."

Second Place, MICROCOSM Award

"His eyes are such a rare, dusty brown. His grin embarrasses me yet sends a tingle through my body. He is always laughing and doing fun things. He treats me like he really cares, but why would he care about someone like me? His kisses, gentle yet forceful. I'm a puppet in his hand...."

"No, surely he wouldn't be out with her. No, he wants me to be with him. He said so...."

"The cops won't catch him! No, you're lying to me; he's not in jail. He wouldn't do anything like that and get caught...."

"See; He didn't stay in jail, and the courts let him off easy. See, he's back to me now. He keeps coming back to me for talk, understanding, and love. He must care for me, even though he has never actually said it...."

"We can't be separated. I don't know how to give him up. He can't be marrying her; she can't be pregnant...."

"No, I won't go anywhere with you as long as you're married. Does this mean that you would cheat on your wife too?"

Why do girls fall in love with bad guys? What do they ever do for us? How do good girls drift so far from their upbringing as to fall in love with someone so different from them and so very bad? What is it about them that attracts us? Do we think we can help them or change them, or is it purely a rebellious desire to escape our good lives? Why do we stay with them to let them hurt us, and why do we defend them and fight for them with all that is in us? Why do we sacrifice friends and precious parts of our life for them? These are a few questions I have asked myself and others as our lives were changed by our bad guys.

When I decided to write on this particular topic, I admit, I had a very personal interest in it. I looked into myself for questions to ask other girls who have wasted time from their lives on bad guys. I wanted to know what caused reasonably intelligent girls to date and go with guys who were bad; whether it be bad from drugs, alcohol, criminal activity, cheating, or all of the above. I had personal interest in finding out if my experiences were generally the same as others in the same situation. Many girls have experienced pain and agony over separation from a guy whom they're better off without anyway. Many girls share their problems with others; therefore, I've heard many a sorrowful tale. I asked myself, "Why did we let it happen to us? Why didn't we control it and stop it from going any further, or get out early?"

I have experienced this type of relationship, and I've been different as a result. There had been so much time spent working things out and overcoming problems, and so little care from him sometimes about what happened or my feelings. Why did I stay with him? Was it love, infatuation? What? Why did I put myself up to be hurt? I knew what he was like. We were great together and had lots of fun. We started as friends, and I lost control of what we had together. In the end, over a year later, the pain and rejection were dished out as others involved themselves in our business. Painfully and tearfully, I witnessed his

wedding to a girl who purposely trapped him as a means of separating us.

Never to see him as my own again, I accepted and tried to deal with it. My heart pained as I saw his stare, his look of "I miss you and we'll be together someday or sometime again." In my heart I knew it would probably never be. He destroyed me and what we had together when he said the words, "I do."

Others knew my pain or some type of it. Good guys were different, but bad guys were worse.

In addition to my talking to other girls, I found an article on this very topic. According to Dalma Heyn, author of "Bad Boys, Why We Love Them So," bad boys are not all bad. She'd all of them. She says history would be nowhere without bad boys. She says, "Without boys from the wrong side of the tracks we would be doomed to choose between John, the president of the class, and Him, computer whiz who got early acceptance to Harvard. We could only choose between being good girls and better girls." She says that the attraction comes from their being so different from you. Often, bad guys stir the first feelings of excitement in a girl. He can reject anything, but chose to be with you.

Michelle Ascher, psychoanalyst in private practice in New York City and an associate professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at New York Medical College in Valhalla, New York, says, "Bad boys are full of exotic, libidinous, drive-ridden behavior...a girl craves a guy experienced enough to show her the way. A bad boy can help her find that dimension. A very normal and necessary step for girls is to find a fearless part of themselves in the external world to live through until they have lost their own fears themselves."

Some bad boys are good for girls and some are bad. Girls need to learn to tell the difference, and it may take all the strength she's got to walk away once she knows. She may think that with a little time and care he would be all right, but that's very rarely so. A girl should go for the bad guy if it feels right, but she should be aware not naive. She should get out if she feels she could get into any kind of trouble.

My conclusion is that we fall in love with bad guys because they are a challenge or, in my experience, a means of escape from our mundane lives. They present themselves just like everyone else, but their excitement and mischievous lives enthrall us. We fall in love and listen to nobody else until the worst sets in. Sometimes lives are drastically affected, as mine was; other times, we get out early enough to have no serious problems caused by it. Then as a whirlwind relationship begins, it ends just as quickly whether it be by parents, cops, or ourselves. My relationship, which involved both happiness and mistakes, involved all the above things and shall be embedded in my mind forever.

Scholarship Award

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January 1989, 83,104.

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Blood on Sand*by Jim Montgomery*

With a shot The soldier was brought to his knees And with fists
clinchd and body pulsed He fell face down into the hot, coarse
sand He lay there motionless as in a dream As the salty water
pierced his body And the sand ground into his bloody wound Tear-
ing the very fight from his soul Suddenly everything was begin-
ning to fade As he could no longer feel the water Splash against his
cold face Or hear the gunfire that surrounded him He felt the sand
shift beneath his aching body As the mighty ocean pulled him yet
closer And with a tear in his eye, he said a short prayer For he was
helpless in his immobility Within minutes his body was gone And
all that remained of a soldier Once full of loyalty and courage Were
the crimson stains of blood on the sand

Michael Murray

I remember the first year I played baseball. My dad bought me my first ball glove, a Carl Yastremski pee-wee model. My mom bought my baseball shoes, an inexpensive pair of leather-like spikes. Though I'd never played before, I was convinced that I would take the Ayer, Massachusetts, Pee-Wee league by storm, sign a big-league contract a few years down the road and rewrite the record book in the annals of sports history. Little did I know.

Standing in line waiting to be picked for a team I thought to myself, "I'm gonna be baaad!!" I was seven years old, and I already dwarfed the kids my age. I was the total package: bigger, stronger and faster than the other guys, just like my hero Steve Austin, the Six Million Dollar Man. But when the coaches saw me, I felt something was wrong. They'd look at me and smile, then whisper among themselves. Finally one of them came to me and asked, "How old are you, son?"

"Seven."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure I'm sure," I replied. I wasn't trying to be smart; I was just telling the facts. My mom even made me bring my birth certificate as proof. Maybe she knew something I didn't. She did.

"How did it go?"

I had just walked in the door of my house later that Saturday morning. My mom stood before me waiting for a reply. "They said I was too big to play Pee-Wees. I have to play with the nine and ten year olds..." How could they do this to me? Why should size make a difference? Can't I do anything about this? Don't they know that I've never played baseball before? Just a year ago I was in Germany playing soccer. Then my dad, who was in the Army, transferred to the States to retire. Now I'm stuck on a baseball team where I'm the smallest guy and I don't even know how to play! I'm doomed.

After several practices, the season was about to start. It was obvious I wasn't going to play, unless half the team was killed. I could catch and throw pretty well but couldn't hit a lick. They pitched the ball so fast! I wanted to quit but Dad wouldn't let me. The coach and some of the players tried to help me, but I couldn't do it. "Oh, well," I said to myself. "I'll just ride the pine."

Our team, the Mets, were the best team in the league. Our first few games got cancelled early because we were scoring too many runs. I never played, but was happy just the same. Eventually the other teams got better and we had to play full seven-inning games. In one game, it was the last inning, and it was obvious we were going to win. Coach Carpenter looked way down at the end of the bench — beyond the other players, the scorebooks, the balls, bats, helmets and gloves strewn carelessly about in the dugout — where I sat. He looked at me and said, "Take some swings, Mike. You're up next." I was stunned.

It was the top of the seventh, a runner on first and the score was something like twenty-two to three when I sauntered to the plate. This is it, I thought. I'll show everybody what a hitter I can be. I stood crouched in my stance, excited, tense, nervous and scared all at once. I watched the pitcher's every move. As he wound up to throw, I thought everyone in this park can kiss this ball good-



CHRISTY KILLINGSWORTH

bye, cuz I'm fixin' to knock it across the state line.

The ball left the lanky pitcher's fingertips and came like a bullet toward my face. He's trying to hit me. This guy is playing dirty. He's trying to hurt me! What if I can't move out of the way in time? Literally and figuratively, the ball flew at breakneck speed, but I couldn't move. If only I could move. If only I could duck out of the way in time...

"Strike one!"

I turned around to see the catcher holding the ball in the heart of the strike zone. The umpire stood behind him with his finger pointed upward. I really got nervous then; I began sweating — down my face, down my neck to the small of my back. My mind began to wander. I didn't think I'd get out of here alive, much less get a hit. As my thoughts strayed, it was hard to concentrate. Before I knew it, the ball was coming at me again. I was paralyzed.

"Strike two!"

The umpire screamed it even louder this time. I wanted more than anything to hit the ball, but was afraid of it. The pitcher lost his composure and threw two balls. Luckily, they were outside. If they were inside I might not have lived to tell this story. After another pitch, also a ball, everyone took notice of me.

My teammates cheered me on, but they were drowned out by other sounds: of the infielders who were egging their pitcher on to "go for the kill"; of the player's parents laughing at the kid who couldn't hit; of the opposing team in their dugout, who before now didn't have much to cheer about.

Then in the background I heard the joyful yelling of the Pee-Wee teams on the field adjacent to ours. I didn't hear it too well but I knew what sounds they were. They were the sounds of happiness: the sounds of other seven-year old kids learning about teamwork and comadorie and sportsmanship, things that make baseball the celebrated game it is. Then again, maybe some little rug rat hit a home run.

"Strike three! You're outta here!"

I was relieved. I was suddenly very tired. The bat felt so heavy I dragged it behind me. This was the lowest point of my seven-year-old life. I put the bat and helmet in its place and sat down in my spot. I got a drink of water. The coach and my teammates tried to cheer me up, but I couldn't hear them. I found my glove and slipped out before the game ended.

As I walked home, many cars filled with kids drove by. I turned around to see the park almost empty. I was almost home when a car turned up my street and crept up behind me. As I got to my front step, a little kid poked his head out of the car window. He teased, "Look, it's the kid who can't hit! It's the statue! Statue, statue, statue!" The car sped off. I sat down on the steps and cried until dark.

All my life I have seen that kid. I saw him whenever I failed. As I got older I cried less and tried more. And even now thirteen years later, whether it was making the all-star team every year or getting a good grade or earning my drivers license or even graduating from high school, I still see that kid peering out from that car. Only now I say, "The statue did all right for himself," and smile.

Fritz Games

A sight uncommon to the stars
makes a mere mortal's heart fall.
Any man, while writing,
would fall from grace
as I do not fall but fade;
I am expressing my love for Elizabeth.

I was seventeen when I fell for Elizabeth,
falling freely with the stars
never leaving, but still I fade
as I call to her to stop my fall;
but in time she reminds me of grace
and again of her grace I am writing.

For nothing escapes me as does writing
about my forever love Elizabeth
with willingness to grab for grace;
only she could catch that star
and glide but never cease to fall,
and unlike me she doesn't fade.

My thirty-first year is but a fade
away and I'm still writing
of her and her grace that never falls.
She won't let me go, my Elizabeth,
always hanging to the moon as does a star;
though now she's with heavenly grace.

She is forever one mind with grace
and as usual will never fade
unless it is willed by a star.
She only remains in my writing
and in my heart, my Elizabeth
will always stay and never fall.

And I can and will always fall
and she never would with her grace.
I wish I could be like my Elizabeth;
she never wanted my love to fade
even after her last year alive in my writings;
her wish fulfilled, her love will not fall.

My pen will always fall and never fade
with grace upon grace in my writing
for my forever love Elizabeth I fall.

Laura Turpin

We were a family of thirteen then. As my little girls and I sat on the living room floor designing and cutting valentines, I remembered the special relationship between Mother's scissors and the holiday seasons, and fun times that my family had when we were small. Mother's new pair of scissors were sharper, but they could never replace the old one's friendship and memories. February was not a month for buying valentines to give, they were homemade. I loved taking Mother's scissors and cutting out hearts and other things to paste to the paper sack cards. Our crayons were broken and few, but they were just the size for us to rub the colors in. Our letters seemed uneven and misspelled, but Mom could read them anyway. Sometimes she would tell us what to put on the cards or a certain way to cut out the paper to make a design. When they were all done she thought they were the prettiest homemade cards ever.

At the thought of the March winds we were already thinking of kites and materials and ways of making money for the summer fund. With Mother's scissors I cut brown paper into strips and numbered the tickets. We began selling rides on our tireless, rusty, old bicycles to the neighborhood bunch. A big push and the metal rims hit the pavement with a clanging sound and there was no chain for speeding up or slowing down, just a few seconds of sheer excitement, and terror, wondering if they would come to a very sudden stop. Their eyes got big as turnip leaves, but no one ever got hurt. We didn't even charge for the most important feature: stopping.

There were less risky ways to earn money. The clover in the yard was pretty and not everyone could tie the tender stalks into bracelets, necklaces and belts. We would pretend to own a store and sell our jewelry like the real jewelry stores. So, for a few cents more, the next day was spent working on clover jewelry. Afterwards, we'd raked our yard for the little pay Mother would offer, then we could head for the neighbor's yards. It wasn't awfully profitable, but it helped the fund and after raking the yards there was a lot of straw. I thought to myself, "There's got to be a way to make this straw worth something."

I had the best idea ever, to build the biggest straw pile for jumping-and-running-through you ever saw. To initiate the straw pile activities, I ran a piece of sewing thread from tree to tree and cut it with Mother's scissors for luck like the Grand Opening of the downtown hardware store. We agreed on five cents for every trip over and through it. Everyone came and the straw dome lasted through the week but then lost its appeal.

When we were in need of summer clothes, mother took her scissors and cut off all our outgrown pants for shorts. In the spring we went to the local Salvation Army Organization for cooler apparel and fall things. As we walked, I recall, Mother told us that Daddy had worked with many Army related organizations while serving under that branch of the service. With thirteen kids, and little income it was the best she could offer us. We didn't mind; I never minded.

I actually looked forward to Mother's scissors and cutting up the scraps from outgrown clothes because that meant interesting kite tails, ponytail ties, and arm wraps. Old scraps made the best arm wraps for everyone when we played "dead man's bluff" in the dark at my cousin's house. I would go to bed with anticipations

of kite tails and hard blowing March winds; I could barely wait. Tomorrow we would start making kites.

The first March morning popped up over the sun like a stick dropped in a full creek as it recoils. I jumped out of bed and grabbed our bag of scraps and carefully picked out the most colorful ones. First to rise got the best pickings, that was the rule. Everybody ran into the room with eagerness. I pulled on clothes, hurrying to spend my share of the summer fund. Mother anteed it up and had given it to us the night before. Before we knew it, we were racing to the dollar store and the hardware store. It was a long walk into town, but it seemed no time. We bought our tiny purchases and rushed home again. We worked steadily resolving small problems together. Finished, we ran down the street to the large field where we played summer ball, the best place to fly a kite.

The wind rose high and fell fast in the field. You had to know the right time to run and lift our kite and just the right moves to get it in the highest position: kite flying was an art to us. March passed, kites and summer dreams were drawn into April and Easter. Easter dawned and I made egg beds from fresh grass with Mother's scissors. Mother asked me to oil the scissors afterward so the water from the grass wouldn't rust them. We cut paper doilies as Mother guided. Mother had a flare for paper art.

The Easter tree was a small fallen oak branch and it was heavy with our new trims and old wooden ornaments. The tiny bird's nest with the teeniest eggs were my favorite. Eggs sat in boiling water, candles waited to be melted, and our broken crayons were better than store-bought dyes. I used Mother's scissors to cut out colored dots and stars to paste to the eggs. We made special cards for our tree, they were tiny and we pasted on the cut string to hang them from the branches. Each egg was gently placed into the egg crates like babies in their cribs. They were carefully counted by my oldest sister; she was the only one allowed to hide them because she could keep count best. A few got squashed and were in bad shape; so, we hid those in the difficult neighbor's yard; in her prized tulip bed.

May peeked out from under a fair April. Vegetables became our project for May. Gardening was the best exercise for not thinking. Your hands did everything and all you had to do was wait a lot. Watermelons, cantaloupes, tomatoes, and pumpkins were the most important crops for we small farmers. That time every year Mother's back yard became ours. Mother bought the seed and we always paid her back after the crop came in. We prepared the soil and made beds for the seed. Later on, we turned to Mother's scissors when the tomatoes had to be staked and a lot of string had to be cut to support the heavy vines. Our harvested tomatoes had the best taste; we ate them all summer long. The neighborhood moms bought most of our crops that we didn't we eat.

The green leaves slowly began turning brittle and started to tumble from the trees. June through September there was pond fishing. Fishing was easy at the pond by the levy. In August, the catfish and other scavengers had begun trying unsuccessfully to break the levy by rooting out the hard gravel. It was so miserably hot my artificial fishing worms melted in my tackle box. Even the fish thought it was too hot to come up from the cool green bottom.

The whippoorwill cries had grown scarce. It grew crisp toward October.

Teepees and melted marshmallows were on our agenda. We told ghost stories at an open-pit grill and ate hot dogs. Every Halloween night we prepared the creepiest-looking ghost made from some discarded old clothes and straw stuffing. We hung it with a rope from the tree to the light pole that we kicked out at certain times and we allowed our ghost to soar across the road in a extra scary fashion as cars came by. We had to cut it down before Mother found out. She never did know about it, and we were glad scissors couldn't talk.

The chill began to rise and in came November a bit frostier than the last one. Turkey season was always sad to me but I tried to think of the wonderful things Mother would serve up on Thanksgiving Day. The year's end seemed to rush along after this holiday. Mother's scissors were for kitchen duties too. We had cranberry sauce, turkey dumplings, and turkey dressing, not knowing we were all together for the last Thanksgiving as we made pies. We were growing up.

Shortly after Thanksgiving the snow clouds began to form. The cold pink clouds covered the sky and I thought of hot chocolate and a blue December. The third Saturday in December we held our traditional "Treasure Sale" for Christmas money. We proudly displayed our summer kites, arm ties, and straw dolls made with Mother's scissors, some summer straw and string. Our kites were like new and the neighborhood kids paid a fair and willing price every year. We earned enough for a few oranges and apples and Mother a small gift.

Mother made hot chocolate and brought her scissors down on that twenty-third frosty day of December and began to bubble with Christmas spirit, spilling it onto Christmas cards. She told us stories the whole day through and as we drew she cut pretty designs for ornaments. Eyes were wide, ears listened, oranges spritzed and apples crunched. There were stories that she told each year, but one story is very special to us. It was how the Lord came to us one Christmas and was born in a manger. She told of his teachings and his sufferings: it always made us cry.

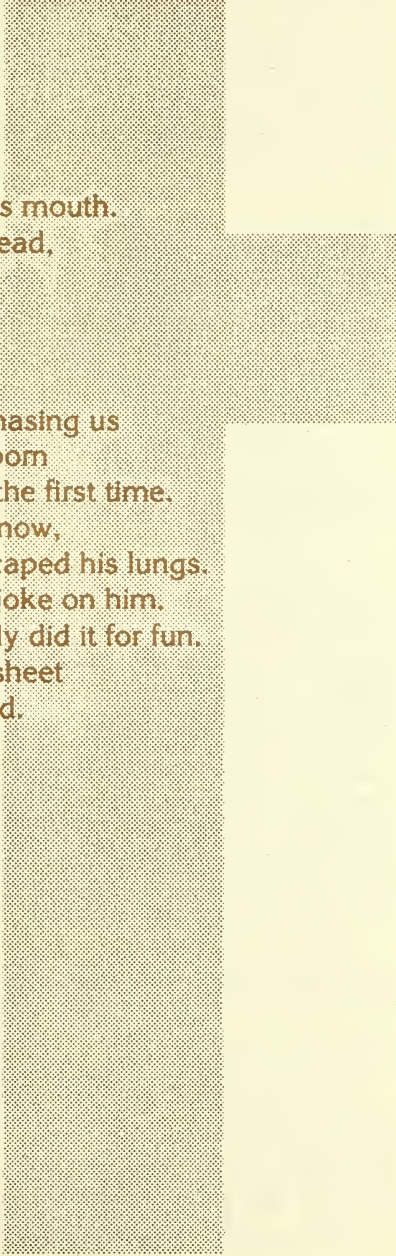
And she told of her big silver scissors that meant so much to her, reminding us of the true meaning of being together and of Christmas. Daddy died when I was almost three; we were all very young. Because Mother loved him so much, his memory is alive with us today in different ways. "He was a good man," she told us. I loved holding those big scissors and thinking of Daddy, Mother, and us. She hurt the most on Christmas, but we missed him too; we still do.

Wiping away the tears, we would began decorating our tree and I thought of how the Lord should have been welcomed and loved. I felt sad to see others' Christmas wishes fade like our summer dreams; somehow mine seemed so unimportant. Especially if Mother got a new pair of scissors and if a single wish could be true, that we would always be together on holidays.

One Christmas we gave Mother a new pair of scissors. The expression on her face said everything she could not say and things we did not know. We do know those big silver scissors meant more to Mother because our Daddy gave them to her many Christmases ago.

Fritz Games

I didn't know if he was alive
or dead, so I just sat there.
All of us sat there, gazing into
eyes that once frightened us, but
now paralyzed us.
The old man would always yell
at us and call us foreign names.
Now, nothing was coming from his mouth.
In all actuality, we knew he was dead,
or at least we thought so.
None of my friends, normally
big talkers, would say a word.
His body looked different
than it usually did when he was chasing us
out of his yard; it was like a new born
calf that fell asleep in the hay for the first time.
There was no doubt in our minds now,
he was dead; the breath of life escaped his lungs.
If only we wouldn't have played a joke on him.
It was only a simple prank, we only did it for fun.
The paramedics pulled the white sheet
over his head; Mr. Brown was dead.



Shelly Grenn

My mother was the one who told my sister Molly and me about Aunt Lily's death. Aunt Lily had died while we were in school. I know we should have been sad, but it was hard to be sad about someone we had only met twice. Molly giggled after hearing the news, but then she was only six years old. I, on the other hand, was eight, so I tried to be sad. I tried not to smile when I saw Molly rolling those big green eyes of hers and wearing Mother's hat. She knew she could make me laugh and did every chance she got. Mother took her hat away from Molly and scolded both of us.

You need to know this was the first death in our family other than our cat Tinkerbell's untimely departure. Molly and I had known Tinkerbell all of our lives. He was a gentle old cat that seemed to tolerate our mischievous behavior. He had just recovered from the whisker-cutting episode, which was Molly's hair-brained idea. She caught Tinkerbell, slipped a string around his neck and tied him to our highchair. Then she trimmed his whiskers and eyebrows without Mother catching him. Fortunately for Tinkerbell, Mother entered the dining room, saw him hanging from the highchair, and quickly cut the string allowing him to fall to the floor and scamper from the room. Later that afternoon, when I returned from my piano lesson, Molly told me all about it. She said she explained to Mother that Mike Witherspoon, the boy next door, told her if she would trim Tinkerbell's whiskers and eyebrows, they would grow back overnight. Needless to say, they didn't.

Just a few weeks later Father found Tinkerbell dead in the garage. Father said he was an old cat and it was his time to leave this world to make room for a new kitten. Father buried Tinkerbell in the backyard and Molly and I placed daisies on his grave. We picked the daisies from Mother's flower bed. The only other thing I knew about death was that old people were usually the ones that died and Aunt Lily was old — maybe she died to make room for a new baby.

Mother said we would be going to New Orleans for the funeral where we would see her relatives. That afternoon Mother began packing our luggage. Molly and I heard a sniffing sound every now and then as Mother went from room to room gathering our clothes. We knew Mother was upset over Aunt Lily's death because she often talked about spending summers in New Orleans with Aunt Lily. Aunt Lily never married and she said Mother was her favorite niece. Mother was even named after Aunt Lily — Lillian Elizabeth Longino.

My grandmother Molly, a sister to Aunt Lily, said a Southern girl should be proud of her name. My mother named Molly after Grandmother Molly and me after two of our aunts - Madeline Beatrice. I was proud of my name, but my hand tired in school when I had to write my name on my school work all day. I wished many times my name was Mary instead of Madeline.

That night after dinner father told us a bedtime story. During the war, he had served in the army in England; we enjoyed hearing stories of the English people, especially the stories of the English children Father helped. Mother said it was difficult for Father to remember those war stories. He had lost many friends in the war. We girls were supposed to help Father forget that horrible time, not remind him of it. After the bedtime story, Father and Mother listened to us say

our prayers and then kissed us goodnight. Of course, Molly and I were excited about our trip to New Orleans and the train ride.

The next morning the smell of bacon frying meant Bessie was cooking breakfast. Bessie was our maid and our best friend. She said Molly and I were a challenge to her patience some days, but the Lord would help her to be more patient. Bessie loved singing church hymns. In the summertime, Molly and I begged Bessie to sing us some hymns before our nap. Sometimes, Molly and I pretended to be asleep. As we gazed at Bessie asleep in the rocker, Molly would tip-toe up to her and tickle her under her chin. This would wake her, but she insisted she was just resting her eyes. She told us God was watching us misbehave.

After breakfast, Molly and I quickly dressed for the trip while Mother and Father had our luggage sent to the depot. Mother hurriedly told Bessie what to do while we were gone. Grandmother Molly and Grandfather John arrived to take us to the depot. Grandmother's eyes were red and puffy from crying about Aunt Lily's death. She wasn't her usual jolly self, and Bessie had told us not to be a challenge to anyone when we took trips and to remember the Lord was watching us. Sometimes I wondered if Bessie cared about the salvation of our souls or if she just tried to scare us so we'd be on our best behavior.

We arrived at the depot early because Grandfather was always early. If anyone or anything made him late, he would start walking back and forth and tapping his cane nervously on the floor. Grandmother would just smile and try to carry on a conversation with him.

The train was on time and we watched as it pulled into the Brookhaven depot. Brookhaven was a pretty, small Mississippi town and, like other towns in the late 1940's, everybody knew each other. We watched the conductor talking to a man who asked the way to Bowman's Barber Shop. I couldn't help but wonder why he would leave the train to get a haircut. I heard the conductor tell Grandfather the man would be boarding the train again for New Orleans. That would be one of the fastest haircuts I had heard of, but Grandfather said Mr. Bowman was known for his steady, quick hands.

After the conductor helped us board the train, I saw a local dentist at the depot. Father and Mother whispered something about him and the dining car. Later I learned he often visited the dining car for the alcoholic beverages served on board. Once he left a patient in the dental chair with denture molds hardening in his mouth and rode as far as McComb.

Just as the train started moving the man who went to the barbershop walked past us and sat down two seats ahead of us. I whispered to Molly that Mr. Bowman must be fast with a razor. Grandfather heard me and winked.

I liked traveling by train. It was fun watching all the different people. Molly and I never had trouble making new friends. Occasionally, we came upon an individual who didn't care if we were their friends or not. That's when Mother would call us back to our seats, and she would start us off on a new game watching the passing countryside. Molly's favorite game was counting barns. I remember one barn on a hill that had a big rainbow painted on its side. After seeing that barn, Molly drew all her barns with rainbows on them.

As lunch time got closer, so did Molly's questions about eating in the

dining car. Mother reminded us both to use good manners and to be quiet as we ate. Sometimes Grandfather's being on the time came in handy and going to the dining car early kept us from waiting to be seated. After we ordered our lunch, the man who got a haircut in Brookhaven came in and sat at a table next to ours. He started a conversation with Father and Grandfather. He introduced himself as Mr. Bernard, a salesman who had traveled many miles by train from New Orleans to Memphis. He said that during his travels he had heard a great deal about Brookhaven and its friendly people. He had even stayed at the Inez Hotel one night and learned about Mr. Bowman's skill in giving a fast haircut. Father told Mr. Bernard we were on our way to New Orleans for a funeral. Mr. Bernard was from New Orleans, but then I knew he wasn't from Mississippi because he talked different.

After lunch Mother told Molly and me we needed to sit down and rest to let our lunch digest. It was really her way of saying she hoped we would be quiet long enough to take a nap. Watching from my window the different scenes passing by and listening to the steady rhythm of the train's wheels, I quickly fell asleep. I was having the most pleasant dream when I was suddenly awakened by a voice calling my name. I awoke and Grandmother Molly told me we were pulling into the train station in New Orleans. Molly was already awake and her usual pixie self.

We watched from our windows the crowds of people in this huge station. It certainly wasn't anything like the station back home. Mother said Aunt Beatrice and Uncle Robert would be talking us to Aunt Lily's home on St. Charles Avenue. As we were leaving the train, Mr. Bernard told us good-bye and was quickly lost in the crowd. Mother spotted Aunt Beatrice and Uncle Robert. After everyone hugged and kissed each other, our luggage was put into the trunk of the car and we were now on our way to Aunt Lily's. Grandfather rode up front with Aunt Beatrice and Uncle Robert. I rode in a half-sitting and half-standing position on Father's knees behind Grandfather. Molly rode sitting in Mother's lap.

As we made our way to Aunt Lily's home, I studied Uncle Robert and Aunt Beatrice. I did not know them well because they didn't visit our family often. They lived in Boston. Uncle Robert was an attorney. Over the years I thought if I ever needed a lawyer I hoped Uncle Robert would be mine because the jury would be too scared not to vote for what Uncle Robert wanted because of his stern looks. On the other hand, Aunt Beatrice was just the opposite — always talking and laughing as if she didn't have a care in the world. They had one son, nine years old, named Robert, Jr., but everybody called him Bobby. Molly and I didn't remember Bobby, but we hoped he was going to play with us. As we drove down St. Charles Avenue, Mother pointed out to Molly and me the streetcars with the people on board. Father said we would ride a streetcar before we left New Orleans. Molly and I couldn't wait for that. Aunt Beatrice started asking Mother if she remembered their first ride on a streetcar. They were about our age when they first rode one.

As we arrived at Aunt Lily's house, Molly and I noticed how huge the house was. Grandmother Molly, Aunt Beatrice, and Mother led the way up the long walk to the front door. We were greeted at the door by Aunt Lily's maid.

Cora started crying when she saw everyone. She was a tall, thin black woman with a high voice. She had worked for Aunt Lily thirty years. We were standing in the foyer listening to the grown-ups when Molly whispered she saw someone in the next room peeking around a statue. We peeked into the room and saw a boy standing by a statue — a statue of a naked woman with broken arms. Molly and I started giggling. The grown-ups heard us and Aunt Beatrice promptly introduced us to their son Bobby. Our cousin greeted us and went back to peeking at us from behind the statue. If we were going to become friends, he would have to quit hiding.

Cora said we could visit after she showed us our room. It was a long walk up the circular staircase. Looking back, I saw Bobby watching us just like the portraits of people that lined the staircase wall. Our room was pretty with pink rose wallpaper. We ran to the window and saw St. Charles Avenue. I thought this would be great because at bedtime we could watch for the streetcars. The doorbell rang and Cora left to answer it with Molly and me not far behind.



It was Aunt Madeline from Mobile. There were more tears and hugs as everybody greeted her. Aunt Madeline was the oldest of Mother's sisters and she wasn't married. As I watched the three sisters standing there talking, I noticed how much they looked alike, yet they were different. Aunt Beatrice talked the most; Mother was a proper lady; Aunt Madeline was quiet and shy. Cora told Grandmother Molly that Mrs. O'Quinn, the cook, had some tea and cakes in the living room for us. Grandfather, Uncle Robert, and Father joined us after helping, Earl, Cora's son, with the luggage. Earl was tall and thin like his mother but very quiet, and he left the room so quietly that even Molly didn't see him leave. Having cornered Bobby on the couch, Molly and I started telling him about our train ride. He wasn't impressed with our story, even the part about Mr. Bernard leaving the train for a haircut. It seemed Bobby had more adventures than Molly and I would ever have dreamed of. He had ridden trains many times to places like Washington, D.C., and New York City. He had even seen a dinosaur skeleton in a museum. Molly and I soon became fascinated with the stories Bobby told us. I was glad he was my cousin.

When we finished our cakes and tea, Molly, Bobby, and I decided to explore Aunt Lily's house. For the next two hours we slowly made our way from room to room. Bobby had arrived the day before and he said he had already explored the house by himself. We followed him, pretending that we were in a haunted house until our screaming brought attention to us and Uncle Robert promptly ended our adventure. After dinner we were sent to bed. Molly and I watched the

streetcars until it was time to go to sleep.

Aunt Lily's funeral was the next day. Cora took care of Bobby, Molly, and me and told us stories about our mothers when they were children. After the funeral Mrs. O'Quinn had an early dinner for the family and friends of Aunt Lily. They told many stories about how kind and generous Aunt Lily was. One story was about a young woman whose husband died in a factory explosion, leaving her a young widow with four children to support. When Aunt Lily had heard about this, she immediately set up a trust for the housing, food and education of those four children. Now grown and scattered across the United States, they could not attend Aunt Lily's funeral; they sent telegrams instead. Their mother attended the funeral, but she was too upset to have dinner here at Aunt Lily's house.

Darkness soon came again but the street was bright with the many street lights. New Orleans was such a big and fast city—nothing like the small slow Brookhaven. Bobby, Molly, and I decided we would not only be cousins but we would also be friends forever after these two days. Father said he would talk us for a ride on a streetcar before we left for home. Molly and I tried to stay awake, but sleep was stronger than our excitement.

The next morning Cora didn't have to wake us. Molly and I dressed and woke Bobby, and after breakfast we woke Father. It didn't take Father long to dress and eat his breakfast. Soon we were walking down the street to the streetcar stop. Molly started jumping up and down when she saw the streetcar coming. The ride down St. Charles Avenue was beautiful with both sides of the street lined with large old homes. Many of the maids were sweeping the porches and sidewalks as we passed. I wondered if Cora was sweeping Aunt Lily's sidewalk.

When we came back to Aunt Lily's, Grandfather had the luggage loaded in Uncle Robert's car. Molly, Bobby, and I were sad and didn't want to leave each other, but we promised to write as soon as we got home. As we started our goodbyes, there were tears and hugs again and the constant chatter of the three sisters talking all at once. However, it was Grandfather who got everybody moving when he started walking back and forth on the porch and started tapping his cane.

So it was off to the depot and more tears and goodbyes there. When the train started pulling out of station, Molly and I watched the city of New Orleans pass by. We smiled at each other and wondered if Bobby had found the frog in his suitcase.

First Place, MICROCOSM Award

Pat Wilson

Most readers consider William Faulkner to be the great American modern writer. His fiction fulfills the demand of creativity, life and energy that a great work of fiction must have. Faulkner faces problems of society and shows that man will overcome those problems. As he said in his Nobel Prize address "... I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."

Since Faulkner writes about so many different types of people, this will be a look, in particular, at the women of The Hamlet, which Faulkner wrote in 1940, thought by some to be his most successful period of writing. The Hamlet is widely accepted as one of his best novels, and throughout the novel he portrays the women as representative of life while the men are representative of destruction.

In The Hamlet, Faulkner's use of comedy prevails despite the perversity, grotesqueness and tragedy. The struggle between the male and female is never-ending; the unresolved conflict is the characteristic movement of human life, and the conflict brings both laughter and sorrow. Eula, the central female character, symbolizes the creativity and productivity of life, and men cannot resist her power. Though Flem wins Eula, the force of his evil is diminished by the constant presence of comedy.

The struggle between the female and the male forces is strong in the story even in the other characters. The pattern of contrast begins in the opening chapter by the almost digressive, yet comic, tale of Abner Snopes's horse bartering with Pat Stammers.

Abner engages in a hopeless trade for a horse, a trade totally useless to him and his poverty-stricken family. Abner bargains for the horse because he idolizes the animal and the trading itself excites him. He believes that if he can get something for less than it is worth, he has shown superior horse-trading ability and will gain respect. In contrast, Abner's wife has saved for four years to buy a separator to divide the Snopes's bed from where the children sleep. In order to buy the horse, Abner uses the money his wife has saved. When the wife discovers what Abner has done, she can only cry out in despair, "But why the horse? Why the horse?" Even though the wife is devoted to the cow which provides real sustenance for her family, she trades the cow for the yearned-for separator.

The men of Frenchmen's Bend are drawn to the horse bartering by the excitement, for the bartering is an opportunity to assert their superiority and Faulkner uses the horse as a symbol of man's individuality and his self-assertive will.

The women in The Hamlet devote themselves to a regular and laborious pattern of family strength. Where the men rarely refuse the opportunity to barter, the females rely on their own labor, faithfully and regularly rendered, to supply their family needs. All of the women characters are notable for the hard labor that is required of them. Even Mrs. Varner, whose husband is rich and has no physical needs, experiences pleasure from putting out freshly ironed sheets and looking

at the store of food that is put away for her family.

Lump Snopes's Ma, a thin plain school teacher, spent her youth caring for her younger brothers and sisters, which prepared her for her marriage that required the ability to "... wash and feed and cloth children without enough food or clothing or soap to do it with." Mink Snopes's wife is able to keep her family barely fed and clothed on Mink's meager earnings as a tenant farmer. When Mink is jailed in Jefferson, she goes to work to provide for their children. The productive labor of the women is striking because their self-submissive attitudes contrast with the self-assertive attitudes of the males.

Like Abner, Mink Snopes takes money that his wife has set aside for family needs and squanders it to satisfy his own pride. The contrast of the two sexes, throughout, is conveyed by the labor verses the bartering and by the cow verses the horse. Faulkner uses the imagery of the slow movement of the cow to associate the cow with the productive labor of the females. And he uses the horse and its imagery of rapid, violent movement to associate destructiveness with the activities of the male.

Faulkner frequently describes women in terms of immobility. For example, the daughters of Abner Snopes, in the act of drawing water from the well, are depicted as two big absolutely static women "... who even in that first glance postulated that immobile solidarity of statuary." The girls are also compared to cows standing knee-deep in air as if they were in standing water.

The immobility associated with women gives the sense of hopelessness and defeat. The hard labors of the females are brought to nothing by the pride and wastefulness of the male. The wife is, in each case, the helpless victim of her husband's actions.

Lucy Pate and Jack Houston's relationship is a good example of the conflict between the life-sustaining qualities of the female and the life-defying ways of the male. From the beginning of the relationship, Lucy seems determined to tame Jack. Faulkner describes the couple's relationship during their school days as a battle between Lucy's will to be married, and Jack's will to remain free of a woman's power.

Houston's desire for freedom drives him to leave Frenchmen's Bend to escape the hold Lucy has over him. Jack lives for seven years with an ex-prostitute all the while knowing the woman never expects to marry him. So, basically, Jack remains free of the female. But throughout his thirteen years away, Jack is unable to forget Lucy and eventually returns to Frenchmen's Bend to marry her. During the time he was gone, Lucy never lost faith that Jack would one day return to marry her. The hand-sewn articles show her faith in and devotion to Jack.

Jack finally returns and settles down with Lucy accepting the marriage as relief from the tension and struggle within himself. He devotes himself to loving his wife and provides her with plenty material goods. But Jack cannot resist purchasing a stallion whose violent spirit is symbolic of his own self-assertive attitude. Though Lucy is aware of the stallion's wild spirit, she does not fear him because she feels the marriage will triumph over the forces that the horse symbolizes. After only six months of marriage, Lucy is attacked by the stallion

and killed while searching out a lost hens' nest in the barn. The final expression of Jack's self-assertion, the stallion, destroys the one thing that brought him peace — Lucy.

Jack's Houston's wild nature emerges again in his grief and anger at his wife's death. Though Jack kills the stallion, he cannot kill the spirit of the stallion that lives within himself. In his grief, he purchases another mighty stallion and isolates himself from society. Jack returns to his old nature and feeds his own pride and self-will until he provokes Mink Snopes into murdering him.

These episodes which involve the people of Frenchmen's Bend are minor battles of the larger war: women are the submissive ones who show the natural forces of life, and the men are trying to escape the power that women have over them. Eula Varner and Flem Snopes are the figures who portray the nature of the two forces in their extremes.

Eula is a source of comic relief in The Hamlet. Faulkner's description of Eula's feminine quality of motionlessness is on the verge of being ridiculous. As a child, Eula refused to walk and was moved about by a servant until she was five years old. The comic image of the over-grown, immovable child is reinforced by Faulkner's description of Eula riding to school on horseback, not knowing the attention she was getting from the half-revealed thighs and by her behavior in school; her only action is the careful eating of the daily sweet potatoes.

Only when Eula begins to mature is the nature of her power apparent to the reader. Faulkner uses rich language to describe Eula's physical appearance. He describes her as "...honey in sunlight and bursting grapes..." Eula does not intend her attractiveness nor does she in any way overuse the power she possesses. Faulkner's use of the comic exaggeration and rich language makes Eula seem to be an unbelievable character. Throughout Eula's life most of the males she meets are powerless against her sexuality.

The men of Frenchmen's Bend respond to Eula with emotions of wild desire and frustrated impotence. Though Eula's first lover, the school teacher Labove, is able to appreciate the nature of Eula's attractiveness, he cannot resist her power. Labove resists her for so long that when he does give in to his desires, it is with violence and lust. Incapable of containing his control any longer, Labove attacks Eula in a fit of passion. For Labove, the sex act is a perverted attempted rape. Eula is the superior force, both literally and symbolically, and she comes out of the encounter unharmed and unmoved. Labove's lustful and violent reaction to Eula initiates a pattern of male destructiveness which Eula must endure throughout her life.

The conflict between the male forces and the drive for submission to the sexual powers of the women produces violence among Eula's teen-age boyfriends. None of them wish to marry her, but they want her sexually. The boys are angered by the feelings that Eula arouses in them. Their repeated failures frustrates them. When Eula loses her virginity to McCarron, all of her "lovers" want to take the credit, but not the responsibility.

Eula's abundant capacity for life endures the violent way in which she was deflowered. The loss of her virginity is treated comically by Faulkner because

it is an insignificant event in terms of her nature. She was born to be unchaste and to reproduce. It is a source of joy and laughter that the natural process has been initiated. The tragedy is that when McCarron flees the responsibility of submitting himself to marriage, Eula is sold out to Flem.

Flem Snopes, a man devoted totally to himself and lacking human sympathy, is also impotent, which means that Eula will not be what God intended her to be, a productive woman. Eula is damned not by the act of losing her virginity but by the males who have set lust and rape above the responsibility to procreate and sustain human life. When Eula is given up to male sterility, Faulkner sees life as betrayed and perverted.

Though The Hamlet is a novel of myth, rich in language, Faulkner is able to convey to the reader the human qualities that he himself believes in. The women of The Hamlet are the ones who maintain the family life while the men of Frenchmen's Bend are trying to escape life and thereby destroy lives. The way the women react to each situation shows Faulkner's great respect for women because even though they are helpless, they are not defeated. William Faulkner believes that man obtains his immortality only through a woman. And when one pauses to think upon this, Faulkner's sense of reality becomes undeniable.

First Place, MICROCOSM

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Susan Sullivan

A deep urge grows inside
To be set free into the air,
To tip-toe through the cotton clouds,
To grab the sparkling sun
And float down the side of the earth
Until the moon comes and takes me back up again.
To flow through the glittered masses,
To feel the wind against my face as I soar on a falling star,
To catch the sun and rise with it above the land
And to start my journey once again.

Scholarship Award

Dreams**Blake Webber**

I sit and watch from behind a tree,
Just hoping she'll take a glance at me,
As she begins to leave my sight,
I want to grab and hug her tight,
As I go to school each passing day,
I pass her up along the way,
I wish she would look and give me a chance,
I want a spark, a flame, a little romance,
As I awake I wish her near,
But I realize the dream will never appear.

Beth Hickman Johnson

The sky was gray. I knew it was when I received that phone call so very early in the morning from an uncle saying my great-grandmother had passed on. The phone rang and awakened me from a sound sleep. This was the kind of deep sleep that makes you think the clock must have been set wrong because there isn't any possible way so many long hours had passed away in so short a time. Then you realize that it's only the telephone.

Listening, but not really understanding, I heard the words I never thought I'd hear. I had wasted so much time. The many long hours I had sat in front of the hypnotizing screen of an unfeeling, uncaring, lifeless object could have been spent with her. My mother was always telling me to go see her because she wouldn't be around very much longer. Now, very much longer is over. I don't even have an excuse. I was told that this would happen and I really didn't have to be. Now I don't have to go see her anymore.

Her husband had passed away many years before. Her son John, my daddy's daddy, was in a boating accident and was killed early in life. Her other son, Houston, had diabetes and had died only a couple of years back. She was all alone. She only had her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I have so many memories of her. It seems like only a few years ago when I would go to visit her. Running up the few steps to ring the doorbell was always my sister's and my destination. It was really useless because she always already knew we were there. She would open the door with a fragile smile on her face and her arms wide open. She was never dressed very fancy, usually cotton dresses and slippers were the extent of her wardrobe. Her voice was a little shaky and it seemed to grow more so each time I visited. Her skin was loose and had brown splotches. No matter how sick she got, she was always glad to see us. She had the most interesting things in her home. All of the wind-up knick-knacks were so fun to play with: the little ceramic girl lying on her ruffled bed with her bottom pooched in the air; and the girl and boy holding the umbrella that played "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head."

She also had beautiful flowerbeds. The colors of the flowers were enough to catch anyone's eye. I always thought of a rainbow because any color imagined could be found there, even black. There were these grasshoppers in her flowerbed that were black with huge orange dots. Ugliest creatures that I could imagine at the time. I wasn't necessarily scared of them, I just didn't want to touch them. They reminded me of bad things then, now they make me think of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. As a matter of fact, my sister and I called them graveyard grasshoppers. That seems so ironic now.

And the birdbath in the middle of the yard fascinated us so much. We would hide and wait for a little bird to come and land in the calm water for a bath. Then we'd run and try to catch it. She didn't have a very big yard; I suppose it was enough for a seventy-something-year-old lady to take care of. And she always did. She would have her grass cut just right for us to roll around and play on.

The things she cooked were so delicious. My stomach rumbled, my mouth watered, and my eyes would always make the decision of how much I ate. She was famous for her chicken and dumplings and her home-made creamed corn;

at least she was to my family and me. It seemed the fuller I got , the more she asked what we wanted next. I guess most grandmothers are like that.

The one thing I remember most about eating at her house was the Coke in the glass bottle. No matter if I went to eat or just to visit, she always offered me a Coke in a glass bottle. She kept them ice cold and I could never resist. You see, times have changed and finding a Coke in a plastic bottle or can is easy; but one in a six-ounce green glass bottle is something rarely seen now. They could be found in her refrigerator every day. That was something that never changed.

The way things looked in her home were always the same. Every wind-up knick-knack was in its place on the coffee table and the richly colored afghan on the couch was a little crooked. But, that was all right because we liked it that way. We could walk out of the present and into the past. It wasn't just any past, it was my past. The past I treasure so deeply.

The sky was gray, and I went to the funeral. To see my family cry was all that I could stand. Tears trickled and tissues grew wetter and wetter. The only thing that gave me any peace was to think of her meeting her husband and her sons in the midst of that glorious bright light that I read about so often. I always knew she would go to Heaven.

Walking into her house after the funeral, a feeling comes over me. I think it was the past trying to get in, but I couldn't let it . Things had changed to the present now. Everyone was eating the food that had been brought by family and friends. Potato salad, ham, fried chicken, cakes and pies were just a few of the many things that made my stomach turn. How could they eat and seem satisfied, especially in her house? I still had that feeling and by this time I was beginning to get upset. It was tugging on my heart and soul and the back of my throat began to tighten. I thought I'd get something cool to wet my mouth and calm my frazzled nerves. Opening the old white refrigerator, there sat a tall cool six-ounce green glass bottle of Coke. My eyes fixed on this bottle for a moment as strange but familiar thoughts ran through my head. As I reached for the bottle and began to drink, that feeling of the past slowly crept in and I was calmed.

First Place, MICROCOSM

Pam Courtney

We can hear the faint sound of the whistle blow, as the train comes closer. We all look at each other and race out to the tracks to greet the train. We found such a thrill in standing by the tracks feeling the strong wind blow our hair and the vibrating of the ground beneath our feet. We take our walkie-talkies with us and talk to the conductor. He would give us a yell and tell us a story.

Sometimes, when we hear the train coming, we take a penny and run place it on the tracks. When we returned the penny would be hot as fire and so flat it resembled a pancake. For awhile, we used rocks the same way, until the conductor told us it would make him wreck, so we stopped.

We were so taken with the trains, we learned as much as we could about them. We even learned to distinguish between a freight train and a passenger train by their sound. We knew what time they were supposed to pass and knew when they were running late and to stay away from the tracks at that time, because they would be going at such great speeds. We loved the trains and how powerful they are; yet, inside us, there was a kind of fearful respect for them. Maybe, it was the fear that captivated us.

We were not the only kids who played games on the railroad tracks. But, the other kids were not like us, they did not respect the trains and their warning sounds. We would sometimes play on the tracks with them, trying to balance ourselves on one rail. The one who made it further was the winner and considered king of the tracks. There was this one girl who was always king of the tracks. We also played a game where as soon as the caboose passed we would count to five and run to see who made it across the tracks first. The same girl who was always king of the tracks would win.

Today, as I stand here looking at the picture on her tombstone, I remember the day our love and respect for the trains turned to hatred and fear. The day we counted to five, started across the tracks, only to hear the sound of a late Amtrack's whistle on the other track. A sound that blew the life and soul out of a ten-year-old girl. A sound that to this day sends chills up my spine and pierces my heart with its shrieking sound.

My fear for the trains is stronger now: I have the fear of history repeating itself. My nine-year-old son shares the same fearless feeling for the trains and their tracks as the girl whose life was taken. He plays in the same way on the tracks as she did, not understanding the dangers, as well as the fun. My son is so much like her in the many ways he looks at life and the trains. You see, it was his aunt the trains took from us.

MICROCOSM Award



CAROLYN RUDDER

Jim Montgomery

Characters

Bill Peters - A high ranking officer in the United States Navy. He has been asked to speak at the annual convention.

Craig Peters - The brother of Bill Peters.

Mr. Whittaker - A Harvard graduate and prominent businessman who is a guest at the convention.

Mrs. Whittaker - The wife of Mr. Whittaker.

Molly Whittaker - The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Whittaker.

Jack Workman - Navy veteran at the convention.

Doorman - Employee of the convention center.

Scene I

(It is 6:30 p.m., and the James L. Knight Convention Center is abound with people who will be attending the annual convention held by the United States Department of the Navy. Some of the guests are Navy veterans, others are dignitaries or prominent socialites, but all of them are important. The limousine heading a caravan has just pulled up to the curb and the doorman rushes to greet them.)

Doorman: Good evening, Mr. Whittaker - Mrs. Whittaker (he assists them out of the car)

Mr. Whittaker: (sternly) Young man, you have forgotten my daughter.

Doorman: (Feeling a bit embarrassed and rushing back to the car) I am so sorry, Miss Whittaker.

Molly: That's all right. I realize that there are those not quite so fortunate as others.

Doorman: (Biting his lip) Yes, ma'm..

Scene II

(It is now 6:45 p.m., and almost everyone has been ushered inside. The room in which the convention will be held is very large and filled with beautifully decorated tables. There is a stage at the front of the room and behind the stage, Bill Peters prepares for the speech he will give that evening. Craig Peters stands

by.)

Bill: For God's sake, Craig, will you stop pacing. You are making me nervous.

Craig: (Sitting down in a nearby chair) Oh, sorry. I stopped smoking last week—it's how I relieve stress now.

Bill: Well, try to refrain for now.

Craig: Ya know Bill, I don't know why you have to speak at this thing tonight. We could be at home right now watching the Dolphins game on TV, but we had to come to a yuppy convention instead. You know they're not going to listen to a word you say. They don't give a damn about naval affairs; this is just another event to show off the newest addition to their wardrobes, and to get their pictures in the paper.

Bill: Craig, will you stop babbling. I told Bateman that I would speak in his place—I thought I told you that already. Why did you come here if you don't like this sort of thing?

Craig: Well, it's good entertainment. (He slouches down in his chair and laughs to himself) You have to admit, watching those yuppies try to impress each other beats sitting at home alone any day. Ya know, even though those people out there may have all the money in the world, they're not worth a damn. They get up probably about ten o'clock and ride ponies for a few hours, then maybe they'll go to the office and foreclose on a few people before spending the rest of the day in the sauna.

(Craig walks over to the curtain and with one hand he pulls the curtain back, and with the other hand he makes an obscene gesture.)

Bill: (His voice ascends, then suddenly descends) Craig, get away from that curtain.

Craig: Don't worry about them. The only thing they're looking at is who bought the biggest diamond ring this week.

Bill: (Becoming impatient) What time is it?

Craig: About ten till seven.

Bill: You'd better go out there and find a seat.

Scene III

(Craig slowly makes his way through the maze of large tables and finds a seat among the gentry.)

Craig: (Extending his hand to the fellow seated next to him) Good evening - Craig Peters.

Mr. Whittaker: (Shaking his hand) Good evening - James Whittaker. Allow me to introduce my lovely wife, Martha, and my beautiful daughter Molly. (Craig nods to each of them) Do you have a particular association with the Navy?

Craig: No, I'm just here because my brother, Bill Peters, will be speaking tonight. Actually, I am employed as a salesman for - (He is interrupted by Mr. Whittaker.)

Mr. Whittaker: Oh, Martha, there's Andrew Felder. We haven't seen him in quite a while. (Craig slumps back into his chair suddenly feels a tap on his right shoulder.)

Jack Workman: Hi, my name is Jack Workman. (They shake hands) I overheard your conversation with the other gentleman. So, you're Bill Peters' younger brother.

Craig: Yes, I am.

Jack Workman: Bill and I go back a long way. We went through boot camp together and then some year later, we were stationed together in the Philippines. Yeah, we go back a long way. (There is a brief pause) So, did you come tonight to hear Bill speak or are you here with your friends. (He looks toward the Whittakers and they both laugh. Their laughter was quickly drowned out by Mr. Whittaker's loud conversation.)

Mr. Whittaker: - Yes, it was shortly after I graduated from Harvard that I decided to go into business for myself. Now, after many flourishing years, my wife and our lovely daughter are able to live the good life. - (Everyone laughs with the Whittakers) Son, (he looks toward Craig) I don't suppose you have eaten caviar.

Craig: Oh, no, and I never will. You wouldn't either if you could see what it has done to my brother.

Mr. Whittaker: And just what might that be?

Craig: I was just about to get to that. You see, it all started right after my brother, Bill, was born. Since our father was also a seaman in the Navy, we moved around a lot --lived in different places. Well, Bill just happened to have been born on a small island in the South Pacific. Of course, I wasn't yet born, but the years since then, I remember well. Anyway, it was traditional on this particular island to feed all newborn children the eggs of some rare fish -- I have forgotten the name of it. It's supposed to insure a long, healthy life. Well, as time went on Bill started having some strange symptoms -- hard, brittle almost scaly skin, and a thick film would sometimes develop over his eyes. (By this time, everyone within earshot was listening intently to Craig's story.) Well, my parents know

what to do, so they took him to the doctor. They said they had never seen anything like it, so he eventually was sent to one of the best specialists around. Come to find out, it was those fish eggs he was fed as a baby -- had some kind of strange effect on his body chemistry.

Mr. Whittaker: Oh, that's ridiculous.

Jack Workman: No, it's true. I've seen it. (Everyone turns and looks at Jack) I used to live on similar island, and I've definitely seen it -- scaly skin, thick eyes-why, I even saw on boy who had slits in his cheeks -- like gills.

(The entire room hushed in silence. Everyone was in awe over the story that had just been told. No one said a word.)

Scene IV

(The master of ceremonies has just introduced Bill Peters on stage to give his speech. Applause on his arrival is minimal.)

Mr. Whittaker: (now white with horror and staring very closely at Bill) Does it affect his job?

Craig: No. As a matter of fact, it works out rather nicely. Most seaman have rough skin, so nobody ever notices, and besides that, he loves to be near the water.

Mrs. Whittaker: Does he have gills?

Craig: No. He was very fortunate in that respect.

Molly: His eyes look normal to me. I thought you said they had a film over them.

Craig: Oh, that's sort of a seasonal thing -- it comes and goes. I guarantee you, though, when spawning season comes, you would swear you were looking a carp right in the face.

Molly: Oh, that's sick! He should be put away in a zoo or in one of those circuses.

(Craig quickly grabs a glass of water to keep from laughing.)

Scene V

(Bill has finished his speech, and Craig and Jack have gone backstage to see him.)

Bill: Jack! (The two shake hands) It's been a long time, man -- good to see ya. Where have you been hiding yourself?

Jack Workman: Oh, just here, there and yonder. You know how it is in the Navy.

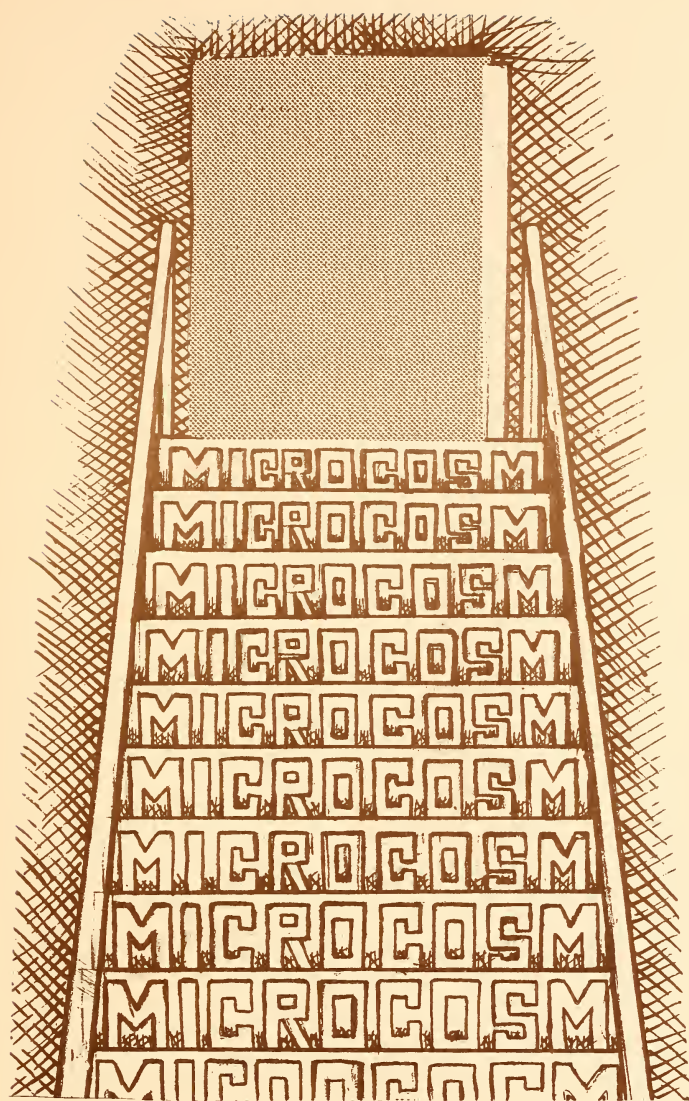
Bill: Don't I ever. By the way, what in the hell was going on out there? Everybody I looked at gave me the strangest reaction. I felt like a fish in a fishbowl and everyone peering in on me.

(Craig and Jack burst out laughing)

Craig: Well, I guess you could say we've put a damper on the caviar industry. (They both laugh)

THE END

MICROCOSM Award



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